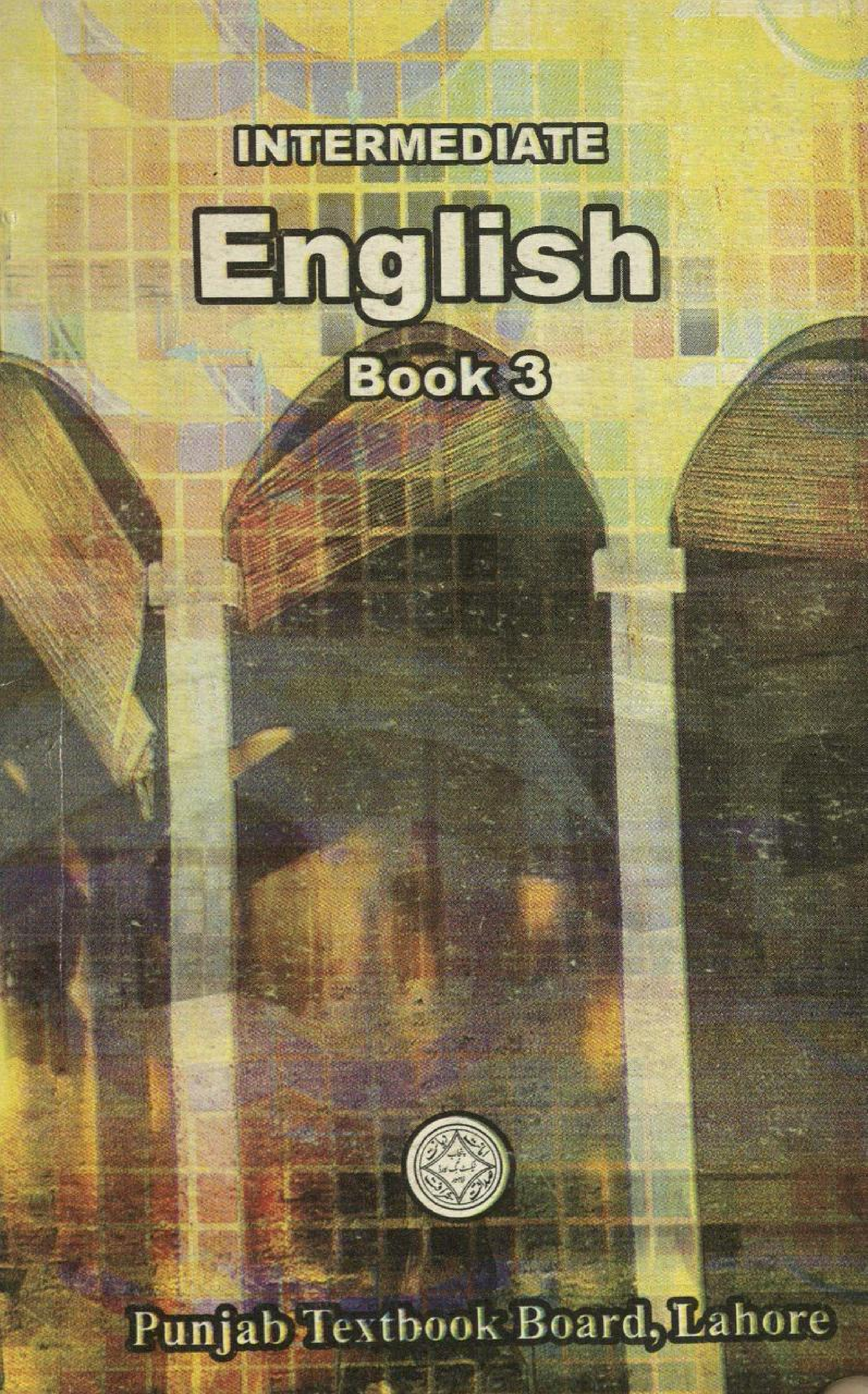

INTERMEDIATE

English

Book 3

Punjab Textbook Board, Lahore

Message from General Pervez Musharaf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The progress and development of a country depends on the quality of education of its people. It is a historical fact that the Muslims ruled the world for hundreds of years on the basis of the knowledge acquired by their intellectuals, philosophers and scientists. The books written by them were of such a high standard that they served as reference books in the western universities for centuries. As long as the Muslims acted upon the Hadith, "to acquire knowledge is the duty of each Muslim male and female", they ruled the world.

In the light of Islamic teachings and to meet the challenges of life, it is incumbent upon all Pakistanis to devote their energies for acquiring knowledge with special emphasis on computer and IT education. It is by focusing on modern disciplines such as these that Pakistan will be able to match the developed countries and earn its rightful place among the comity of nations.

Our curriculum in the past was not in concert with the requirements of modern times. I am pleased to note that the government has not only given importance to the sovereignty and security of the country, but also taken steps for the improvement of the quality of education and curriculum to bring it in tune with the latest standards. Keeping in view these requirements, the textbooks have been developed, revised and updated.

Dear Students,

Now it is your duty to work hard with full devotion for acquiring knowledge so that in future, as responsible citizens of Pakistan, you may continue to take the nation forward on the path of progress and prosperity. The interest of Pakistan should be the first and foremost objective of your life. May the Blessings of Allah be with us all. (Ameen).

MESSAGE OF CHIEF MINISTER (PUNJAB)

The progress in education is at its peak in the present day. The quality of education is the main distinction of the developed nations. To achieve excellence in quality education, the curriculum and textbooks play the basic role. Placing main emphasis on modernization of curriculum and textbooks, proves beyond any doubt the priority given by my government to the education sector.

As for curriculum development, a team of professional experts was assembled for writing of textbooks, which will prove helpful in achieving the quality of education.

Dear students! To achieve a better standard of life, quality education plays a pivotal role. My government is trying hard to provide this base. Now it is your duty to make use of these textbooks and play your full role in the development of Pakistan.

I pray to God Almighty that the new generation, keeping in view the modern trends of education, may make progress by leaps and bounds.

(Ch. Parvaiz Elahi)
Chief Minister (Punjab)

ENGLISH BOOK – III

FOR

INTERMEDIATE CLASSES

(PLAYS AND POEMS)

Development & Text Book Production Wing * H-9 Islamabad
126
LIBRARY

FOR

PUNJAB TEXTBOOK BOARD, LAHORE

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Play No. 1

HEAT LIGHTNING

by

Robert F. Carroll

Characters

Girl

First Man

Second Man

Setting

The Interior of a bus station

HEAT LIGHTNING

SCENE

The drab interior of a bus station along a deserted highway somewhere in the midwest. There are two long benches stage Right, back to back; one faces the audience and one faces the rear wall. A door up Center leads out onto the road. It has a single glass pane in the top and the bottom is wooden. Two doors, up Left and down Left. Up Left door reads "Men"; down Left door reads "Women." The room is lighted by an overhanging light with a dull green shade. A large bus schedule on the wall up Right Center. A window is up Right of Center and another at Right.

The sound of heavy RAIN can be heard outside. LIGHTNING flashes outside followed by large bursts of THUNDER. With each flash of lightning the light in the room dims almost to the point of going out, but somehow feebly struggles back to its full strength.

When the Curtain rises the stage is bare. Then a Man enters from the "Men's" room. He is a pleasant looking Man of about thirty-five. He takes off his hat and shakes the water from it; puts it on the bench downstage. He glances at the door up Center. Moves to it and peers out the glass; turns and moves to the Schedule on the wall and reads it. He then moves downstage and sits on the bench facing the audience. He picks up a discarded newspaper that lies on the seat beside him. He glances back at the door, then turns his attention once more to the paper and begins going through it casually.

The door up Center suddenly bursts open and a Girl of about twenty-three rushes into the room. She is sobbing and is out of breath. She throws her body against the door, slamming it. The Man turns about quickly. She throws the bolt into place and turns slowly, seeing the Man. The Girl's *clothes are wet and muddy. Her hair is dishevelled. She sobs and rushes to the Man quickly.*

Girl *(Hysterically).* Thank God! You're here! Oh, thank God!

(She almost falls and the Man catches her.)

Man My dear! What is it?

Girl Help me. Oh, please – please help me!

Man Good Heavens! You're in a terrible state. What has happened?

Girl Don't let him in. Please. He's after me. Please don't let him in.

Man Who? Who's after you?

Girl He'll be here any minute. Please – help me!

(The Girl looks to the Center door. The LIGHTNING flashes and the LIGHT dims slowly. The Girl looks at the light and begins sobbing again.)

Man Please, my dear, try to tell me what happened. You've locked the door. No one can come in. Now try to calm yourself.

(The LIGHT has recovered again.)

Girl You're waiting for the bus, aren't you? Oh, don't leave me! *(She rushes into his arms.)*

Man There, my dear! Of course I won't leave you!

Girl The bus. What time – Oh, tell me it will be here soon.

Man The last one's due any time now. The storm has probably slowed it down. Now, listen to me. I shall do whatever I can for you, but you must tell me what has happened.

Girl Yes – Yes – I must get hold of myself.

Man Here. Sit down. *(He brings her down to the bench facing the audience.)* There, now, that's better, isn't it? Now –

Girl I was at a party. I – I could have stayed all night with a friend, but I thought I had enough gas to get home –

Man Where do you live?

Girl About eight miles from here.

Man I see.

Girl About a mile from here, I suppose – I don't really know, I ran out of gas – I took my flashlight and locked the car and started walking down the road. There are so few cars this time of the morning, but I thought – anyway – I knew I could get the bus when it came along and then – go back for the car later. *(She breaks off and glances at the door again. She shudders at her own thoughts.)*

Man Come on, now. You were doing fine.

Girl I must have walked – I don't know – just a little way, when I noticed a car pulled off into a lane. I saw the rear light burning. I wanted to call to them. I thought I'd just call out to them and ask if they could help me – if they might let me have some gas.

Man Did you?

Girl No – I – I didn't get the chance to. I walked near enough to the car to be heard if I called, but – before I could call out, I saw someone. The front door of the car was open and someone was standing by it. A man – he hadn't heard me – he was – he was pulling something out of the car. I couldn't tell what it was at first – and then the lightning – and I – I saw her hand and then – her head – her hair was light and long and it dragged in the mud.

Man This is dreadful!

(There is a flash of LIGHTNING and a crash of THUNDER.)

Girl He'll be here. He'll be here. I'm scared. Oh, God, I'm scared.

Man Did he see you?

Girl May be my flashlight – may be I screamed – I don't know – I don't think I screamed. I was too frightened. He looked up – I knew he saw me. I dropped the flashlight and started running. I could hear him behind me. I could hear the water splashing under his feet as he ran. I knew he was behind me – I was afraid I was going to faint. I ran crazy like all over the road – then I ran off the road and into the woods – I circled round and round hoping I'd lose him, but I kept hearing something behind me – I ran until I fell – I knew there was no use – I couldn't keep it up – but then I realized I must have lost him – because I didn't hear him anymore.

Man And you came straight here, then?

Girl Yes – Yes – Oh, he's still out there – somewhere. He'll be here. Oh, God! I know he will.

Man The bus will be here soon and you'll be all right.

Girl Yes. Oh, God, please let it come quickly.

Man You'll have to get to the police immediately.

Girl No – I couldn't. I don't want to – I'm afraid.

Man But you must. It's your duty. This is a dreadful thing.

Girl I know, but – what could I tell them?

Man Tell them what you told me just now.

Girl That wouldn't be enough – they'd want me to describe him. May be identify him. I couldn't – I just couldn't.

Man Are you sure you couldn't think of something that might give them a lead. Anything?

Girl I don't even know what he looked like. I couldn't see him very well – I was so frightened.

Man Nevertheless you've got to go to the police.

Girl I don't know – I –

Man They'll ask you a lot of questions, of course, but I'm sure you can answer most of them. After you tell them the story the way you told it to me, there'll be routine questions, but they'll be simple. They'll probably ask you something like – was he wearing a hat? How was he dressed?

Girl I don't even know that!

Man Or – was he tall? Was he short? How would you describe him generally?

Girl I don't know – I swear – I just don't know.

Man In the lightning – are you sure you didn't see his face at all?

Girl I don't remember. May be he was wearing a hat or something. I don't remember seeing his face.

Man But you saw the girl.

Girl No – I didn't.

Man But you said her hair was light – and you saw her hand.

Girl Yes, I did. In the lightning, I think – Yes.

Man But you don't remember seeing him?

Girl No – I don't. *(She begins sobbing.)*

Man I'm sorry – I shouldn't be going on like this – you are much too upset to even think any more about it. Don't worry about it anymore. Something will come to you later – that you've forgotten about right now. You'll see.

Girl Perhaps.

Man Your flashlight – for instance. You could identify that, couldn't you?

Girl Yes – but –

Man There, you see! Now – look – *(Points to "Women's" room.)* Go in there, and dry your eyes and fix yourself up. You'll feel much better.

Girl You won't leave, will you?

Man Of course not, my dear. I'll be right here!

(She moves toward the door up Left. There is a brilliant flash of LIGHTNING. The LIGHT begins to dim. The Girl looks toward the Center door. There is a second flash of LIGHTNING illuminating the Center door. The Girl screams. In the flash of lightning, a Man's face can be seen pressed against the glass outside the door. The door rattles viciously. The LIGHT in the room has almost dimmed out.)

Man *(Pushing her toward "Women's room).* Get in there. Stay until I tell you to come out.

(The Man pushes her into the room quickly.)

Second Man *(Outside the door. Rattles the door viciously once more).* Let me in. Open this door. Let me in!

Man What do you want?

Second Man *(Outside).* I want to get out of this storm. What the hell do you think I want? What's the idea of locking this door? You think you own this place? *(The Man goes to the door slowly, throws back the bolt and the Second Man enters quickly. He is a nondescript sort of person. Tall, nice-looking and about thirty years of age. He looks about the room as he enters.)* You've got no right to lock that door – keeping people outside in this kind of weather. *(The Second Man moves up to the Schedule on the wall.)* Has there been a bus?

Man No – not yet.

Second Man Late, huh? Good.

Man Why?

Second Man Why? I'd have missed it if it were on time – wouldn't I?

Man Yes – of course – how stupid of me.

Second Man There's someone else here, isn't there?

Man What do you mean?

Second Man I saw somebody else when I looked in.

Man There –

Second Man A girl, wasn't it?

(The two Men look at each other a moment; then the First Man walks to the

door where the Girl has gone and knocks on it. The door opens slowly and the Girl enters. When she sees the other man standing in the room, she starts to cry out, but the man puts his finger to his lip conveying silence to her and then guides her downstage to the bench.)

Second Man I thought you said –

Man I didn't say anything.

Second Man You tried to tell me there was no one else here. I thought there was –

Man Did you?

Second Man Yeah, I was sure there was. What was the idea of lying?

Man I wasn't conscious of lying about anything.

Second Man Yeah? I guess I'm imaginin' things. Oh, well – forget it. How far you going?

Man Just into town.

Second Man How about you, Miss?

Girl Not far.

(The Second Man starts moving down toward the Girl. She sees him coming, and moves over to the wall, appearing to read the schedule)

Second Man It's pretty late, isn't it? I was in luck, don't you think? I told that to our friend here, but he didn't get it. *(To First Man).* I'll bet she's smarter than you are.

Man Yes – I suppose she might – be.

Second man *(noticing the Girl's nervousness).* Say, you look pretty nervous about something. Storm upset your plans? You can expect storms to slow up buses. If people were smart they wouldn't be out on a night like this. Just try to get somewhere when it storms – can't be done – especially if you're in a hurry.

Girl I'm – I'm in no particular hurry.

Second Man Well, I sure as hell am – but there's nothing I can do about it – I guess.

(There is another flash of LIGHTNING and the LIGHT dims very low again. The Girl is pressed against the Right window in fear. The LIGHT recovers.)

Second Man Say – you're really upset, aren't you? Has somebody been bothering you? *(The Second Man moves toward her again.)*

Girl It's – it's just the storm.

Second Man Afraid of storms?

Girl Yes – I – am.

(The Girl seems as if she is about to faint. The First Man pushes ahead of the Second Man and takes her by the arm and leads her down to the bench.)

Man She'll be all right. Why don't you leave her alone?

Second Man Yeah! Sure! *(He moves away, watching the Girl.)*

(There is another brilliant flash of LIGHTNING and a crack of THUNDER. The LIGHT dims slowly and goes out. The Girl lets out a muffled cry.)

Man Here! Have a chewing gum, my dear.

(The Man opens the packet and gives her one. The Second man pushes his head between them.)

Second Man Don't mind to have one more, do you?

Man No, of course not. *(Gives him one more.)*

(The LIGHT comes up slowly.)

Second Man Thanks. *(He strolls up toward the Center door.)* God! What a night! Always wonder what brings people out on nights like this. Wouldn't catch me out if it weren't pretty important. *(To Man.)* How about you?

Man I have early business in town.

Second Man *(To Girl).* And you?

Girl I was visiting – with friends. I should have stayed the night.

Second Man Oh! You're not together then?

Man Er – no –

Second Man I see. *(He moves down toward the Girl.)* How far did you say you were going?

Girl Not far – about eight miles.

(The Second Man sits beside her and she moves away suspiciously.)

Second Man I never saw anybody so afraid of a storm.

Girl It's the lightning – I –

Second Man Lightning. I used to be afraid of it, when I was a kid, but I got over it. All by myself too. *(He takes the Girl's arm.)* Look! Come here. I'll show you. *(He leads her up to the window rear Right.)* Watch the sky the next time there's a big flash. One of the really beautiful sights in this world if you look at it right – like a great big Fourth of July. *(There is now a brilliant flash of LIGHTNING.)* Look! See! What did I tell you? It's just like it was cutting the whole world in two. *(The Girl breaks away and goes Right.)* You wouldn't even watch it. You'll never get over being afraid of things if you won't face them.

Girl I can't.

(There is the hum of a MOTOR in the distance. They All listen. The Second Man goes to the window.)

Second Man I guess that's it – Yep – Looks empty.

Girl Empty!

(There is the sound of BRAKES being applied. Each waits for the other to make the first move.)

Second Man Well – are we going?

Man No!

Second man What?

Man I'm not going!

Second Man Why?

Man I don't see that I have to give you a reason for what I do.

Second Man No – I guess you don't at that – *(He looks at the Girl, then moves to her, reaching for her arm.)* Well, in that case, I guess we'll just keep each other company, won't we? *(The Girl is stunned. She looks to the First Man, who stands behind the Second Man. The First Man shakes his head "no." There is the sound of a HORN outside.)*

Girl *(Backing away from the Second Man).* No – No – No – I don't think I'll go either. I'll wait-

Second Man I think you'd better come on. We'll have it all to ourselves.

Girl No – No – I won't. Leave me alone. I'm going to stay here – with him.

Second Man *(Looks from one to the other).* I get it. Waiting for a bus! *(He laughs.)* No wonder you had the door locked! *(The Second man exits laughing.)*

(The Girl rushes after him, slamming the door and throwing the bolt once more. She listens to the sound of the BUS pulling away. Then she turns quickly to the Man.)

(WARN Curtain)

Girl Thank God!

Man I tried to tell him you weren't here.

Girl But you let him in – In God's name – why?

Man He was making such a disturbance out there. Besides there was really no way to tell for certain that –

Girl No – He's gone – He's gone – I guess it wasn't – No – I somehow don't think it was –

Man You don't think it was he?

Girl No – I – don't –

Man Yes – You do! You know that wasn't the man. Why? That's a step to remembering.

Girl No – only that he – left. He left –

Man Yes, you do! I knew it would come back slowly – that you'd remember something.

Girl No!

Man First, you would say – That wasn't the man because I remember – and then later – That was the man because I remember. Yes. You would remember!

Girl No! *(There is another brilliant flash of LIGHTNING and the LIGHT begins to dim.)* Oh – no – the light – Dear God – No!

Man Don't worry, my dear. You'll have light.

(He has taken a flashlight from his coat pocket. The Girl stares at it as the LIGHTNING crashes again and the already very dim LIGHT dies completely. The piercing light of the flashlight is the only light in the room. The Girl runs up to the Center door and pulls at it). She bolts the door before the Man comes near her. A dog that comes there by chance to save itself from the storm jumps and seizes the Man with its sharp teeth. The light plays over, and highlights the inside of the room. The dog forces the Man to run away and the Girl comes out to pat the dog.

CURTAIN

Theme

In this play, a frightened young woman, running from a killer on a dark and stormy night, thinks that she has found a safe haven in a bus station. The situation of the play is highly emotional from the moment the curtain rises until it falls. There is terror from the outset, and there are all the components necessary to create a melodrama – a dimly – lit bus station, a storm accompanied by flashes of lightning, and the promise of violent action or emotion.

The scene is tense and highly emotional, and the ingredients of a good thriller are present from the opening speech. As is the case with good melodrama, theme and characterization are secondary. The mood and the suspense of waiting for the development of the plot are the factors that draw the reader / viewer quickly into the final stage of the play.

Reading Notes

hysterically	with outbursts of emotion
I must get hold of myself	I must become calm
I had enough gas to get home	I had enough petrol to reach home
ran out of gas	ran out of petrol
breaks	stop speaking
come on	continue, keep speaking
just a little way	only a short distance
I'd lose him	I'd escape from him
give them a lead	provide them with a clue
sobbing	drawing in the breath sharply and with irregularity from sorrow or pain.
rattles	knock (sharp)
viciously	giving or doing with evil intention
what's the idea of	what's the reason for
nondescript sort of person	uninteresting person
pretty late	quite late
in luck	fortunate
he didn't get it	he didn't understand
I sure as hell am	I am very much sure
suspiciously	showing suspicion
stunned	shocked
I got over it	I recovered from it (the fear)
all by myself	completely alone without any help from some one else.
piercing	going into or through

EXERCISES

I Choose the correct answer.

i. The bus was late due to

a) rush b) storm

c) accident d) change in schedule

ii. The girl was coming from

a) the party b) tour

c) a hill station d) a station

iii. The girl was afraid of

a) the policeman b) a friend

c) a killer d) a person

iv. She thought of reaching the house but

a) the car broke down

b) the brakes failed

c) the car ran out of gas

d) the road was blocked

v. She saw the man dragging out of his car

a) the corpse of a woman

b) a sack

c) a statue

d) a dog

vi. Why did she circle round and round into the wood?

a) to escape from the killer

b) to reach a safe place

c) to cheat a man

d) to save herself

vii. "You couldn't think of something that might give them a lead" means

a) to find a culprit

b) to find a treasure

c) to persecute
d) to get a clue

viii. She saw in the flash of lightning
a) a dog b) a bus
c) a car d) a man's face

ix. The difference in the age of two men is of
a) ten years b) five years
c) two years d) one year

x. If people were smart they wouldn't be out
a) on a day like this
b) on a holiday
c) on a tour
d) on a night like this

II Tick the statement true / false.

1. The car ran out of gas about two miles from here.
2. She was too frightened to tell the details of the incident.
3. The girl went to the police to report the matter.
4. The second man wanted to save himself from the storm.
5. The first man wanted to go to town for business.
6. They heard the hum of a motor in the distance.
7. She could not remember the description of the killer.
8. She bolted the door before the man came near.

III. Answer the following questions.

(a) Why couldn't the girl describe the killer?

(b) What were the circumstances that forced her to leave her car?

(c) Why did she ask for help from the first man?

(d) What was the condition of the weather?

(e) How did the second man accuse the first man of lying?

(f) Did the girl become suspicious of the first man as the play progresses?

(g) What is the impression of her about the second man?

(h) Why didn't she accompany the second man?

IV Answer the following question in 100–150 words.

(a) Write down the story of the play in your own words.

(b) Have you any experience of a similar situation? Write, at least ten sentences.

(c) Why did the girl consider the first man her helper?

(d) What are the factors that played their role in saving the girl?

(e) How did she realize the truth?

V. Punctuate the following lines.

i want to get out of this storm what the hell do you think i want what's the idea of locking this door you think you own this place.

VI. Fill in the blanks using a preposition given in bracket (to, down, along, of, over, in).

1. She sobs and rushes ______ the man quickly.
2. He brings her ______ to the bench.
3. I could get the bus when it came ______.
4. I run crazy like all ______ the road.

5. I'm sure you can answer most _____ them.
6. I saw somebody else when I looked ______.
7. You'll never get over being afraid _____ things.
8. The dog jumps ________ and seizes the man.

Play No. 2

VISIT TO A SMALL PLANET

by

Gore Vidal

Characters

Kreton

Roger Spelding

Ellen Spelding

Mrs. Spelding

John Randolph

General Powers

Aide

Scene

Stock Shot: The night sky, stars. Then slowly a luminous object arcs into view. As it is almost upon us, dissolve to the living room of the Spelding house in Maryland.

Superimpose Card: "THE TIME: THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW"

The room is comfortably balanced between the expensively decorated and the homely. ROGER SPELDING is concluding his TV broadcast. He is middleaged, unctuous, resonant. His wife, bored and vague, knits passively while he talks at his desk. Two technicians are on hand, operating the equipment. His daughter, ELLEN, a lively girl of twenty, fidgets as she listens.

Spelding *(Into microphone)*… and so, according to General Powers … who should know if anyone does…. the flying object which has given rise to so much irresponsible conjecture is nothing more than a meteor passing through the earth's orbit. It is not, as many believe, a secret weapon of this country. Nor is it a spaceship as certain lunatic elements have suggested. General Powers has assured me that it is highly doubtful there is any form of life on other planets capable of building a spaceship. "If any travelling is to be done in space, we will do it first." And those are his exact words…. Which winds up another week of news. *(Crosses to pose with wife and daughter).* This is Roger Spelding, saying good night to Mother and Father America, from my old homestead in

Silver Glen, Maryland, close to the warm pulsebeat of the nation.

Technician Good show tonight, Mr. Spelding.

Spelding Thank you.

Technician Yes sir, you were right on time.

Spelding nods wearily, his mechanical smile and heartiness suddenly gone.

Mrs. Spelding Very nice, dear. Very nice.

Technician See you next week, Mr. Spelding.

Spelding Thank you, boys.

Technicians go.

Spelding Did you like the broadcast, Ellen?

Ellen Of course I did, Daddy.

Spelding Then what did I say?

Ellen Oh, that's not fair.

Spelding It's not very flattering when one's own daughter won't listen to what one says while millions of people…

Ellen I always listen, Daddy, you know that.

Mrs. Spelding We love your broadcasts, dear. I don't know what we'd do without them.

Spelding Starve.

Ellen I wonder what's keeping John?

Spelding Certainly not work.

Ellen Oh, Daddy, stop it! John works very hard and you know it.

Mrs. Spelding Yes, he's a perfectly nice boy, Roger. I like him.

Spelding I know. I know: He has every virtue except the most important one: he has no get-up-and-go.

Ellen *(Precisely)* He doesn't want to get up and he doesn't want to go because he's already where he wants to be on his own farm which is exactly where I'm going to be when we're married.

Spelding More thankless than a serpent's tooth is an ungrateful child.

Ellen I don't think that's right. Isn't it "more deadly…"

Spelding Whatever the exact quotation is, I stand by the sentiment.

Mrs. Spelding Please don't quarrel. It always gives me a headache.

Spelding I never quarrel. I merely reason, in my simple way, with Miss Know-it-all here.

Ellen Oh, Daddy! Next you'll tell me I should marry for money.

Spelding There is nothing wrong with marrying a wealthy man. The horror of it has always eluded me. However, my only wish is that you marry someone hard-working ambitious, a man who'll make his mark in the world. Not a boy who plans to sit on a farm all his life, growing peanuts.

Ellen English walnuts.

Spelding Will you stop correcting me?

Ellen But, Daddy, John grows walnuts…

John enters, breathlessly.

John Come out! Quick! It's coming this way. It's going to land right here!

Spelding What's going to land?

John The spaceship. Look!

Spelding Apparently you didn't hear my broadcast. The flying object in question is a meteor not a spaceship.

John has gone out with Ellen. Spelding *and Mrs. Spelding follow.*

Mrs. Spelding Oh, my! Look! Something is falling! Roger, you don't think it's going to hit the house, do you?

Spelding The odds against being hit by a falling object that size are, I should say, roughly, ten million to one.

John Ten million to one or not it's going to land right here, and it's not falling.

Spelding I'm sure it's a meteor.

Mrs. Spelding Shouldn't we go down to the cellar?

Spelding If it's not a meteor, it's an optical illusion… mass hysteria.

Ellen Daddy, it's a real spaceship. I'm sure it is.

Spelding Or may be a weather balloon. Yes, that's what it is. General Powers said only yesterday…

John It's landing!

Spelding I'm going to call the police … the Army.

Bolts inside.

Ellen Oh look how it shines!

John Here it comes!

Mrs. Spelding Right in my rose garden!

Ellen May be it's a balloon.

John No, it's a spaceship and right in your own backyard.

Ellen What makes it shine so?

John I don't know but I'm going to find out.

Runs off toward the light.

Ellen Oh, darling, don't! John, please! John, John come back!

Spelding wide-eyed returns.

Mrs. Spelding Roger, it's landed right in my rose garden.

Spelding I got General Powers. He's coming over. He said they've been watching this thing. They… they don't know what it is.

Ellen You mean it's nothing of ours?

Spelding They believe it… *(Swallows hard)*… it's from outer space.

Ellen And John's down there! Daddy, get a gun or something.

Spelding Perhaps we'd better leave the house until the Army gets here.

Ellen We can't leave John.

Spelding I can. *(Peers nearsightedly)* Why, it's not much larger than a car. I'm sure it's some kind of meteor.

Ellen Meteors are blazing hot.

Spelding This is a cold one….

Ellen It's opening…. The whole side's opening! *(Shouts)* John! Come back! Quick…

Mrs. Spelding Why, there's a man getting out of it! *(Sighs)* I feel much better already. I'm sure if we ask him, he'll move that thing for us. Roger, you ask him.

Spelding *(Ominously)* If it's really a man?

Ellen John's shaking hands with him *(Calls)* John darling, come on up here…

Mrs. Spelding And bring your friend…

Spelding There's something wrong with the way that creature looks… if it is a man and not a … not a monster.

Mrs. Spelding He looks perfectly nice to me.

John and the visitor appear. The visitor is in his forties, a mild, pleasant looking man with side-whiskers and dressed in the fashion of 1860. He pauses when he sees the three people, in silence for a moment. They stare back at him, equally interested.

Visitor I seem to've made a mistake. I am sorry. I'd better go back and start over again.

Spelding My dear sir, you've only just arrived. Come in, come in. I don't need to tell you what a pleasure this is …. Mister …. Mister ….

Visitor Kreton … This is the wrong costume, isn't it?

Spelding Wrong for what?

Kreton For the country, and the time,

Spelding Well, it's a trifle old-fashioned.

Mrs. Spelding But really awfully handsome.

Kreton Thank you.

Mrs. Spelding *(to husband).* Ask him about moving that thing off my rose bed.

Spelding leads them all into living room.

Spelding Come on in and sit down. You must be tired after your trip.

Kreton Yes, I am a little. *(Looking around delightedly)* Oh, it's better than I'd hoped!

Spelding Better? What's better?

Kreton The house …. That's what you call it? Or is this an apartment?

Spelding This is a house in the State of Maryland, U.S.A.

Kereton In the late 20th century! To think this is really the 20th century. I must sit down a moment and collect myself. The real thing!

He sits down.

Ellen You …. You're not an American, are you?

Kreton What a nice thought! No, I'm not.

John You sound more English.

Kreton Do I? Is my accent very bad?

John No, It's quite good.

Spelding Where are you from, Mr. Kreton?

Kreton *(Evasively)* Another place.

Spelding On this earth of course.

Kreton No, not on this planet.

Ellen Are you from Mars?

Kreton Oh dear no, not Mars. There's nobody on Mars…. At least no one I know.

Ellen I'm sure you're teasing us and this is all some kind of publicity stunt.

Kreton No, I really am from another place.

Spelding I don't suppose you'd consent to my interviewing you on television?

Kreton I don't think your authorities will like that. They are terribly upset as it is.

Spelding How do you know?

Kreton Well, I … pick up things. For instance, I know that in a few minutes a number of people from your Army will be here to question me and they … like you … are torn by doubt.

Spelding How extraordinary!

Ellen Why did you come here?

Kreton Simply a visit to your small planet. I've been studying it for years. In fact, one might say, you people are my hobby. Especially, this period of your development.

John Are you the first person from your planet to travel in space like this?

Kreton Oh my no! Everyone travels who wants to. It's just that no one wants to visit you. I can't think, why? I always have. You'd be surprised what a thorough study I've made. *(Recites)* The planet, Earth, is divided into five continents with a number of large islands. It is mostly water. There is one moon. Civilization is only just beginning …

Spelding Just beginning! My dear sir, we have had.

Kreton *(Blandly)* You are only in the initial stages, the most fascinating stages as far as I'm concerned … I do hope I don't sound patronizing.

Ellen Well, we are very proud.

Kreton I know and that's one of your most endearing primitive traits. Oh, I can't believe I'm here at last!

General Powers, a vigorous product of the National Guard, and his AIDE enter.

Powers All right folks. The place is surrounded by troops. Where is the monster?

Kreton I, my dear General, am the monster.

Powers What are you dressed up for, a fancy-dress party?

Kreton I'd hoped to be in the constume of the period. As you see I am about a hundred years too late.

Powers Roger, who is this joker?

Spelding This is Mr. Kreton … General powers. Mr. Kreton arrived in that thing outside. He is from another planet.

Powers I don't believe it.

Ellen It's true. We saw him get out of the flying saucer.

Powers *(To AIDE)* Captain, go down and look at the ship. But be careful. Don't touch anything. And don't let anybody else near it. *(AIDE goes)* So you're from another planet.

Kerton Yes. My, that's a very smart uniform but I prefer the ones made of metal, the ones you used to wear, you know: with the feathers on top.

Powers That was five hundred years ago … Are you sure you're not from the Earth?

Kreton Yes

Powers Well, I'm not. You've got some pretty tall explaining to do.

Kreton Anything to oblige.

Powers All right, which planet?

Kreton None that you have ever heard of.

Powers Where is it?

Kreton You wouldn't know.

Powers This solar system?

Kreton No.

Powers Another system?

Kreton Yes.

Powers Look, I don't want to play games: I just want to know where you're from. The law requires it.

Kreton It's possible that I could explain it to a mathematician but I'm afraid I couldn't explain it to you, not for another five hundred years and by then of course you'd be dead because you people do die, don't you?

Powers What?

Kreton Poor fragile butterflies, such brief little moments in the sun … You see we don't die.

Powers You'll die all right if it turns out you're a spy or a hostile alien.

Kreton I'm sure you wouldn't be so cruel.

AIDE returns; he looks disturbed.

Powers What did you find?

AIDE I'm not sure, General.

Powers *(Heavily)* Then do your best to describe what the object is like.

AIDE Well, it's elliptical, with a fourteen foot diameter. And it's made of an unknown metal which shines and inside there isn't anything.

Powers Isn't anything?

AIDE There's nothing inside the ship: No instruments, no food, nothing.

Powers *(To Kreton)* What did you do with your instrument board?

Kreton With my what? Oh, I don't have one.

Powers How does the thing travel?

Kreton I don't know.

Powers You don't know. Now look, Mister, you're in pretty serious trouble. I suggest you do a bit of cooperating. You claim you travelled here from outer space in a machine with no instruments ….

Kreton Well, these cars are rather common in my world and I suppose, once upon a time, I must've known the theory on which they operate but I've long since forgotten. After all, General, we're not mechanics, you and I.

Powers Roger, do you mind if we use your study?

Spelding Not at all. Not at all, General.

Powers Mr. Kreton and I are going to have a chat. *(To AIDE)* Put in a call to the Chief of Staff.

AIDE Yes, General.

Spelding rises, leads Kreton and Powers into next room, a handsomely furnished study, many books and a globe of the world.

Spelding This way, gentlemen.

(Kreton sits down comfortably beside the globe which he twirls thoughtfully. At the door, Spelding speaks in a low voice to Powers). I hope I'll be the one to get the story first, Tom.

Powers There isn't any story. Complete censorship. I'm sorry but this house is under martial law. I've a hunch we're in trouble. *(He shuts the door. Spelding turns and rejoins his family).*

Ellen I think he's wonderful whoever he is.

Mrs. Spelding I wonder how much damage he did to my rose garden ….

John It's sure hard to believe he's really from outer space. No instruments, no nothing

… boy, they must be advanced scientifically.

Mrs. Spelding Is he spending the night, dear?

Spelding What?

Mrs. Spelding Is he spending the night?

Spelding Oh yes, yes, I suppose he will be.

Mrs. Spelding Then I'd better go make up the bedroom. He seems perfectly nice to me. I like his whiskers. They're so very … comforting. Like Grandfather Spelding's. She goes.

Spelding *(Bitterly)* I know this story will leak out before I can interview him. I just know it.

Ellen What does it mean, we're under martial law.

Spelding It means we have to do what General Powers tells us to do. *(He goes to the window as a soldier passes by)* See?

John I wish I'd taken a closer look at that ship when I had the chance.

Ellen Perhaps he'll give us a ride in it.

John Travelling in space! Just like those stories. You know: intergalactic drive stuff.

Spelding If he's not an impostor.

Ellen I have a feeling he isn't.

John Well, I better call the family and tell them I'm all right.

He crosses to telephone by the door which leads into hall.

AIDE I'm sorry, sir, but you can't use the phone.

Spelding He certainly can. This is my house ….

AIDE *(Mechanically)* This house is a military reservation until the crisis is over: Order General Powers. I'm sorry.

John How am I to call home to say where I am?

AIDE Only General Powers can help you. You're also forbidden to leave this house without permission.

Spelding You can't do this!

AIDE I'm afraid, sir, we've done it.

Ellen Isn't it exciting!

Cut to study.

Powers Are you deliberately trying to confuse me?

Kreton Not deliberately, no.

Powers We have gone over and over this for two hours now and all that you've told me is that you're from another planet in another solar system….

Kreton In another dimension. I think that's the word you use.

Powers In another dimension and you have come here as a tourist.

Kreton Up to a point, yes. What did you expect?

Powers It is my job to guard the security of this country.

Kreton I'm sure that must be very interesting work.

Powers For all I know, you are a spy, sent here by an alien race to study us, preparatory to invasion.

Kreton Oh, none of my people would dream of invading you.

Powers How do I know that's true?

Kreton You don't, so I suggest you believe me. I should also warn you: I can tell what's inside.

Powers What's inside?

Kreton What's inside your mind.

Powers You're a mind reader?

Kreton I don't really read it. I hear it.

Powers What am I thinking?

Kreton That I am either a lunatic from the earth or a spy from another world.

Powers Correct. But then you could've guessed that. *(Frowns)* What am I thinking now?

Kreton You're making a picture. Three silver stars. You're pinning them on your shoulder, instead of the two stars you now wear.

Powers *(Startled)* That's right. I was thinking of my promotion.

Kreton If there's anything I can do to hurry it along, just let me know.

Powers You can. Tell me why you're here.

Kreton Well, we don't travel much, my people. We used to but since we see everything through special monitors and recreators, there is no particular need to travel. However, I am a hobbyist. I love to gad about.

Powers *(Taking notes)* Are you the first to visit us?

Kreton Oh, no! We started visiting you long before there were people on the planet. However, we are seldom noticed on our trips. I'm sorry to say I slipped up, coming in the way I did … but then this visit was all rather impromptu. *(Laughs)* I am a creature of impulse, I fear.

AIDE looks in.

AIDE Chief of Staff on the telephone, General.

Powers *(Picks up phone).* Hello, Yes, sir. Powers speaking. I'm talking to him now. No, sir. No, sir. No, we can't determine what method of power was used. He won't talk. Yes, sir. I'll hold him here. I've put the house under martial law … belongs to a friend of mine, Roger Spelding, the TV commentator. Roger Spelding, the TV … What? Oh, no, I'm sure he won't say anything. Who … oh, yes, sir. Yes, I realize the importance of it. Yes, I will. Good-bye.*(Hangs up)* The President of the United States wants to know all about you.

Kreton How nice of him! And I want to know all about him. But I do wish you'd let me rest a bit first. Your language is still not familiar to me. I had to learn them all, quite exhausting.

Powers You speak all our languages?

Kreton Yes, all of them. But then it's easier than you might think since I can see what's inside.

Powers. Speaking of what's inside, we're going to take your ship apart.

Kreton Oh, I wish you wouldn't.

Powers Security demands it.

Kreton In that case my security demands you leave it alone.

Powers You plan to stop us?

Kreton I already have … Listen.

Far-off shouting AIDE rushes into the study.

AIDE Something's happened to the ship, General. The door's shut and there's some kind of wall all around it, an invisible wall. We can't get near it.

Kreton *(To camera)* I hope there was no one inside.

Powers *(To Kreton)* How did you do that?

Kreton I couldn't begin to explain. Now if you don't mind, I think we should go in and see our hosts.

He rises, goes into living room. Powers and AIDE look at each other.

Powers Don't let him out of your sight.

Cut to living room as Powers picks up phone. Kreton is with John and Ellen.

Kreton I don't mind curiosity but I really can't permit them to wreck my poor ship.

Ellen What do you plan to do, now you're here?

Kreton Oh, keep busy. I have a project or two … *(Sighs)* I can't believe you're real.

John Then we're all in the same boat.

Kreton. Boat? Oh, yes! Well, I should have come ages ago but I … I couldn't get away until yesterday.

John Yesterday? It only took you a day to get here?

Kreton One of my days, not yours. But then you don't know about time yet.

John Oh, you mean relativity.

Kreton No, it's much more involved than that. You won't know about time until … now let me see if I remember … no, I don't, but it's about two thousand years.

John What do we do between now and then?

Kreton You simply go on the way you are, living your exciting primitive lives … you have no idea how much fun you're having now.

Ellen I hope you'll stay with us while you're here.

Kreton That's very nice of you. Perhaps I will. Though I'm sure you'll get tired of having a visitor under foot all the time.

Ellen Certainly not. And Daddy will be deliriously happy. He can interview you by the hour.

John What's it like in outer space?

Kreton Dull.

Ellen I should think it would be divine!

Powers enters.

Kreton No, General, it won't work.

Powers What won't work?

Kreton Trying to blow up my little force field. You'll just plough up Mrs. Spelding's garden.

Powers snarls and goes into study.

Ellen Can you tell what we're all thinking?

Kreton Yes. As a matter of fact, it makes me a bit giddy. Your minds are not at all like ours. You see we control our thoughts while you … well, it's extraordinary the things you think about!

Ellen Oh, how awful, you can tell everything we think?

Kreton Everything! It's one of the reasons I'm here, to intoxicate myself with your primitive minds … with the wonderful rawness of your emotions! You have no idea how it excites me! You simply seethe with unlikely emotions.

Ellen I've never felt so sordid.

John From now on I'm going to think about agriculture.

Spelding *(Entering)* You would.

Ellen Daddy!

Kreton No, no. You must go right on thinking about Ellen. Such wonderfully *purple* thoughts!

Spelding Now see here, Powers, you're carrying this martial law thing too far …

Powers Unfortunately, until I have received word from Washington as to the final disposition of this problem, you must obey my orders: no telephone calls, no communication with the outside.

Spelding This is unsupportable.

Kreton Poor Mr. Spelding! If you like, I shall go. That would solve everything, wouldn't it?

Powers You're not going anywhere, Mr. Kreton, until I've had my instructions.

Kreton I sincerely doubt if you could stop me. However, I put it up to Mr. Spelding. Shall I go?

Spelding Yes! *(Powers gestures a warning)* Do stay, I mean, we want you to get a good impression of us …

Kreton And of course you still want to be the first journalist to interview me. Fair enough. All right, I'll stay on for a while.

Powers Thank you.

Kreton Don't mention it.

Spelding General, may I ask our guest a few questions?

Powers Go right ahead, Roger. I hope you'll do better than I did.

Spelding Since you read our minds, you probably already know what our fears are.

Kreton I do, yes.

Spelding We are afraid that you represent a hostile race.

Kreton And I have assured General Powers that my people are not remotely hostile. Except for me, no one is interested in this planet's present stage.

Spelding Does this mean you might be interested in a later stage?

Kreton I'm not permitted to discuss your future. Of course my friends think me perverse to be interested in a primitive society but there's no accounting for tastes, is there? You are my hobby. I love you. And that's all there is to it.

Powers So you're just here to look around … sort of going native.

Kreton What a nice expression! That's it exactly. I am going native.

Powers *(Grimly)* Well, it is my view that you have been sent here by another civilization for the express purpose of reconnoitering prior to invasion.

Kreton That would be your view! The wonderfully primitive assumption that all strangers are hostile. You're almost too good to be true, General.

Powers You deny your people intend to make trouble for us?

Kreton I deny it.

Powers Then are they interested in establishing communication with us? Trade? That kind of thing?

Kreton We have always had communication with you. As for trade, well, we do not trade … that is something peculiar only to your social level. *(Quickly)* which I'm not criticizing! As you know, I approve of everything you do.

Powers I give up.

Spelding You have no interest then in …. Well, trying to dominate the earth.

Kreton Oh, yes!

Powers I thought you just said your people weren't interested in us.

Kreton They're not, but I am.

Powers You!

Kreton Me … I mean I, you see I've come here to take charge.

Powers Of the United States?

Kreton No, of the whole world. I'm sure you'll be much happier and it will be great fun for me. You'll get used to it in no time.

Powers This is ridiculous. How can one man take over the world?

Kreton *(Gaily)* Wait and see!

Powers *(To AIDE)* Grab him!

Powers and AIDE rush Kreton but within a foot of him, they stop, stunned.

Kreton You can't touch me. That's part of the game. *(He yawns)* Now, if you don't mind, I shall go up to my room for a little lie-down.

Spelding I'll show you the way.

Kreton That's all right. I know the way. *(Touches his brow)* Such savage thoughts! My head is vibrating like a drum. I feel quite giddy, all of you thinking away. *(He starts to the door; he pauses beside Mrs. Spelding)* No, it's not a dream, dear lady. I shall be here in the morning when you wake up. And now, good night, dear, wicked children …

He goes as we fade out.

VISIT TO A SMALL PLANET

About the Author

Gore Vidal, a famous American playwright and novelist, was born on October 3, 1925 in New York. He has written a number of famous plays and novels: *Death in Fifth Position, Death Before Bed Time, A Star's Progress. Visit to a Small Planet* first appeared on Television in 1956 and opened in 1957 on Broadway to enthusiastic reviews. It is a beautiful combination of sheer entertainment and a thought provoking comment on American culture.

Theme

The play shows that the people of the 20th century are still in the beginning of their civilization as compared with those of the planets of other solar systems. The future man will be free from hatred and violence and feel pride in the service of mankind.

Reading Notes

luminous	shining, giving out light
unctuous	smooth in speech or manner
resonant	resounding
fidgets	make somebody nervous
conjecture	guess, put forward an opinion formed without facts
lunatic	mad person
homestead	farm house
eluded	avoided
walnuts	nut with an edible kernel in a hard shell
cellar	underground for storing something.

hysteria	disturbance of the nervous system with outburst of emotion
meteor	small particle of matter that enters the earth atmosphere from outer space and becomes bright.
ominously	threateningly
evasively	trying to evade
blandly	gently or politely
fascinating	having strong charm
patronizing	encouraging
fragile	broken, weak
twirls	turns round and round quickly
hunch	thick piece, hump
intergalactic	In between the galaxies
imposter	person pretending to be somebody he is not
gad	go from place to place for pleasure, old fashioned for surprise
impromptu	without preparation
deliriously	wildly excited
intoxicate	cause to lose self-control as a result of taking some drink
sordid	wretched, shabby
reconnoitering	To go to or near a place (occupied by forces)

EXERCISES

1. Choose the correct answer.

i. Who is Roger Spelding?
   a) a general   b) a soldier
   c) a newscaster   d) a technician

ii. John is a
   a) merchant   b) farm owner
   c) pilot   d) professor

iii. Where did the spaceship land?
   a) on the roof of a building
   b) in the fields
   c) on a hill
   d) in the lawn of the house of Mrs. Spelding

iv. Ellen listened to the broadcast of her
   a) daddy   b) fiance
   c) mother   d) Kreton

v. The visitor was dressed in the fashion of
   a) 1960   b) 1860
   c) 1900   d) 1850

vi. What is the impression of Kreton on seeing the inside of the house?
   a) disgusted   b) delightful
   c) callous   d) sorrowful

vii. “I do hope I don’t sound patronizing” means that I am
   a) not praising   b) encouraging
   c) discouraging   d) not appreciating

viii. How many years are required to tell the story of travel?

a) one hundred b) two hundred

c) five hundred d) seven hundred

ix. The house of Spelding comes under the

a) civil law b) criminal law

c) company law d) martial law

x. General Powers was thinking about

a) his promotion

b) security of the country

c) arrest of Kreton

d) murder of the visitor

2. Tick the statement true or false.

i. Ellen is going to marry John, a farm boy.

ii. A girl should prefer to marry a hardworking and ambitious boy.

iii. The space man looked like a monster.

iv. Kreton cannot read the minds of the people.

v. Kreton is interested in the study of the civilization of earth.

vi. There are no instruments in the flying saucer.

vii. Mrs. Spelding is worried about her rose garden.

viii. Kreton gives his consent to spend the night.

ix. General Powers thinks Kreton is a spy.

x. The race of Kreton is violent like that of earth.

3. Answer the following questions.

i. How does Kreton prove his extraordinary powers? Write five sentences.

ii. What is the purpose of the visit of Kreton?

iii. How much advanced is the civilization of Kreton than that of the earth?

iv. Can the people of the earth compete with the people of Kreton?

v. How much damaging is violence in life? Write five sentences.

vi. What type of life do you foresee in the year 5000?

vii. How much impressive were the morals of Kreton?

viii. What is the role of General Powers in the play?

ix. What is the theme of the study of Kreton?

x. How does Kreton impress General Powers?

4. Answer the following questions in 100-150 words.

i. Write a note on
    a) Mr. Spelding
    b) Mrs. Spelding
    c) Ellen
    d) John
    e) General Powers
    f) Kreton

ii. How does the playwright expose the inferiority of the present race to that of the future?

iii. Describe the scene of the arrival of the flying saucer.

iv. Compare and contrast the people of two planets.

v. Write a story of your visit to a far off place in the north of Pakistan.

5. **Fill in the blanks:**

i) It's not very flattering when one's own daughter won't listen ______ what one says. (for, to)

ii) He doesn't want to get ______. (up, setup)

iii) There is nothing wrong _____ marrying a wealthy man. (with, for)

iv) There is something wrong ______ the way that creature looks. (without, with)

v) I'm sure you're teasing us and this is _____ some kind of publicity stunt. (none, all)

vi) You'd be surprised what a ______ study I've made. (thorough, through)

vii) As you see I am _____ a hundred years too late. (above, about)

viii) It's possible that I could explain it to a mathematician but I'm afraid I couldn't explain it _____ you. (about, to)

ix) I must've known the theory ______ which they operate. (on, at)

x) I wonder how _____ damage he did to my rose garden. (many, much)

6. **Use the following phrasal verbs in sentences of your own.**

a) pass on b) pass through
c) pass over d) pass down

7. **Punctuate the following lines:**

the odds against being hit by a falling object that size are I should say roughly ten million to one

Play No. 3

THE OYSTER AND THE PEARL

By

William Saroyan

CHARACTERS

HARRY VAN DUSEN, a barber.

CLAY LARRABEE, a boy on Saturday.

VIVIAN McCUTCHEON, a new school teacher.

CLARK LARRABEE, Clay's father.

MAN, a writer.

ROXANNA LARRABEE, Clay's sister.

GREELEY, Clay's pal.

JUDGE APPLEGARTH, a beach comber.

WOZZECK, a watch repairer.

THE OYSTER AND THE PEARL

"The Oyster and the Pearl" is a sentimental comedy. The play has humor, a happy ending, and demonstrates faith in the basic goodness of human nature. It reflects the author's attitude toward life and people, whom Saroyan finds eminently fascinating and wonderful, although a little "odd" at times.

Although there is a story line, that is not the author's main concern. He wants the reader/viewer to enjoy, to relax, to "play" as the play progresses. There is no clearly defined plot nor is there an attempt to establish a strong "hero" figure. Saroyan wants to examine the possibilities of life and the people who play a part in it. Yet he also has something serious to say. You, the reader, are to discover what it is.

SCENE.

Harry Van Dusen's barber shop in O.K.-by-the-Sea, California, population 909. The sign on the window says: HARRY VAN DUSEN, BARBER. *It's an old-fashioned shop, crowded with stuff not usually found in barber shops... Harry himself, for instance. He has never been known to put on a barber's white jacket or to work without a hat of some sort on his head: a stovepipe, a derby, a western, a homburg, a skullcap, a beret, or a straw, as if putting on these various hats somewhat expressed the quality of his soul, or suggested the range of it.*

On the walls, on shelves, are many odds and ends, some apparently washed up by the sea, which is a block down the street: abalone and other shells, rocks, pieces of driftwood, a life jacket, rope, sea plants. There is one old-fashioned chair.

When the play begins, Harry is seated in the chair. A boy of nine or ten named Clay Larrabee is giving him a haircut. Harry is reading a book, one of many in the shop.

CLAY. Well, I did what you told me, Mr. Van Dusen. I hope it's all right. I'm no barber, though. *(He begins to comb the hair.)*

HARRY. You just gave me a haircut, didn't you?

CLAY. I don't know *what* you'd call it. You want to look at it in the mirror? *(He holds out a small mirror.)*

HARRY. No thanks. I remember the last one.

CLAY. I guess I'll never be a barber.

HARRY. May be not. On the other hand, you may turn out to be the one man hidden away in the junk of the world who will bring merriment to the tired old human heart.

CLAY. Who? Me?

HARRY. Why not?

CLAY. Merriment to the tired old human heart? How do you do that?

HARRY. Compose a symphony, paint a picture, write a book, invent a philosophy.

CLAY. Not me! Did you ever do stuff like that?

HARRY. I did.

CLAY. What did you do?

HARRY. Invented a philosophy. CLAY. What's that?

HARRY. A way to live.

CLAY. What way did you invent?

HARRY. The *Take-it-easy* way.

CLAY. That sounds pretty good.

HARRY. All philosophies *sound* good. The trouble with mine was, I kept forgetting to take it easy. Until one day. The day I came off the highway into this barber shop. The barber told me the shop was for sale. I told him all I had to my name was eighty dollars. He sold me the shop for seventy-five, and threw in the hair- cut. I've been here ever since. That was twenty-four years ago.

CLAY. Before I was born.

HARRY. Fifteen or sixteen years before you were born.

CLAY. How old were you then?

HARRY. Old enough to know a good thing when I saw it.

CLAY. What did you see?

HARRY. O.K.-by-the-Sea, and this shop-the proper place for me to stop. That's a couplet. Shakespeare had them at the end of a scene, so I guess that's the end of this haircut. *(He gets out of the chair, goes to the hat tree, and puts on* a *derby.)*

CLAY. I guess I'd never get a haircut if you weren't in town, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY. Nobody would, since I'm the only barber.

CLAY. I mean, free of charge.

HARRY. I give you a haircut free of charge, you give me a haircut free of charge. That's fair and square.

CLAY. Yes, but you're a barber. You get a dollar a hair cut.

HARRY. Now and then I do. Now and then I don't.

CLAY. Well, anyhow, thanks a lot. I guess I'll go down to the beach now and look for stuff.

HARRY. I'd go with you but I'm expecting a little Saturday business.

CLAY. This time I'm going to find something *real good,* I think.

HARRY. The sea washes up some pretty good things at that, doesn't it?

CLAY. It sure does, except money.

HARRY. What do you want the money for?

CLAY. Things I need.

HARRY. What do you need?

CLAY. I want to get my father to come home again. I want to buy Mother a present.

HARRY. Now, wait a minute, Clay, let me get this straight. Where is your father?

CLAY. I don't know. He went off the day after I got my last haircut about a month ago.

HARRY. What do you mean, he went off?

CLAY. He just picked up and went off.

HARRY. Did he say when he was coming back?

CLAY. No. All he said was, Enough's enough. Rewrote it on the kitchen wall.

HARRY. Enough's enough?

CLAY. Yeah. We all thought he'd be back in a day or two, but now we know we've got *to find* him and *bring* him back.

HARRY. How do you expect to do that?

CLAY. Well, we put an ad in *The O.K.-by-the-Sea Gull,..* that comes out every Saturday.

HARRY *(opening the paper).* This paper? But your father's not in town. How will he see an ad in this paper?

CLAY. He *might* see it. Anyhow, we don't know what else to do. We're living off the money we saved from the summer we worked, but there ain't much left.

HARRY. The summer you worked?

CLAY. Yeah. Summer before last, just before we moved here, we picked cotton in Kern Country. My father, my mother, and me.

HARRY. *(indicating the paper).* What do you say in your ad?

CLAY *(looking at it).* Well, I say... Clark Larrabee. Come home. Your fishing tackle's in the closet safe and sound. The fishing's good, plenty of cabazon, perch, and bass. Let bygones be bygones. We miss you. Mama, Clay, Roxanna, Rufus, Clara.

HARRY. That's a good ad.

CLAY. Do you think if my father reads it, he'll come home?

HARRY. I don't know, Clay. I hope so.

CLAY. Yeah. Thanks a lot for the haircut, Mr. Van Dusen.

[Clay goes out. Harry takes off the derby, lathers his face, and begins to shave with a straight-edge razor. A pretty girl in a swimming suit comes into the shop, closing a colorful parasol. She has long blonde hair.] .

HARRY. Miss America, I presume.

THE GIRL. Miss McCutcheon.

HARRY. Harry Van Dusen.

THE GIRL. How do you do.

HARRY *(bowing).* Miss McCutcheon.

THE GIRL. I'm new here.

HARRY. You'd be new anywhere-brand new, I might say. Surely you don't live here.

THE GIRL. As a matter of fact, I do. At any rate, I've been here since last Sunday. You see, I'm the new teacher at the school.

HARRY. You are?

THE GIRL. Yes, I am.

HARRY. How do you like it?

THE GIRL. One week at this school has knocked me for a loop. As a matter of fact, I want to quit and go home to San Francisco. At the same time I have a feeling I ought to stay. What do you think?

HARRY. Are you serious? I mean, in asking me?

THE GIRL. Of course I'm serious. You've been here a long time. You know everybody in town. Shall I go, or shall I stay?

HARRY. Depends on what you're looking for. I stopped here twenty-four years ago because I decided I wasn't looking for anything anymore. Well, I was mistaken. I *was* looking, and I've found exactly what I was looking for.

THE GIRL. What's that?

HARRY. A chance to take my time. That's why I'm still here. What are *you* looking for, Miss McCutcheon!

THE GIRL. Well .....

HARRY. I mean, besides a husband......

THE GIRL. I'm not looking for a husband. I expect a husband to look for me.

HARRY. That's fair.

THE GIRL. I'm looking for a chance to teach.

HARRY. That's fair too.

THE GIRL. But this town!... The children just don't seem to care about anything-whether they get good grades or bad, whether they pass or fail, or anything -else. On top of that, almost all of them are unruly. The only thing they seem to be interested in is games, and the sea. That's why I'm on my way to the beach now. I thought if I could watch them on a Saturday I might understand them better.

HARRY. Yes, that's a thought.

THE GIRL. Nobody seems to have any sensible ambition. It's all fun and play. How can I teach children like that? What can I teach them?

HARRY. English.

THE GIRL. Of course.

HARRY *(drying his face)*. Singing, dancing, cooking…..

THE GIRL. Cooking? ...I.must say I expected to see a much older man.

HARRY. Well! Thank You!

THE GIRL. Not at all.

HARRY. The question is, shall you stay, or shall you go back to San Francisco? .

THE GIRL. Yes.

HARRY. The answer is, go back while the going's good.

THE GIRL. Why? I mean, a moment ago I believed you were going to point out why I ought to stay)"', and then suddenly you say I ought to go back. Why)"'?

HARRY *(after a pause)*. You're too good for a town like this.

THE GIRL. I am not!

HARRY. Too young and too intelligent. Youth and intelligence need excitement. ;

THE GIRL. There are *kinds* of excitement.

HARRY. Yes, there are. You need the big-city kind. There isn't an eligible bachelor in town.

THE GIRL. You seem to think all I want is to find a husband.

HARRY. But only to teach. You want to teach him to become a father, so you can have a lot of children of your own to teach.

THE GIRL. *(She sits almost angrily in the chair and speaks very softly.)* I'd like a poodle haircut if you don't mind, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY. You'll have to get that in San Francisco, I'm afraid.

THE GIRL. Why? Aren't you a barber?

HARRY. I am.

THE GIRL. Well, this is your shop. It's open for business. I'm a customer. I've got money. I want a poodle haircut.

HARRY. I don't know how to give a poodle haircut, but even if I know how, I wouldn't do it.

THE GIRL. Why not?

HARRY. I don't give women haircuts. The only women who visit this shop bring their small children for haircuts.

THE GIRL. I want a poodle haircut, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY. I'm sorry, Miss McCutcheon. In my sleep, in a nightmare, I would *not* cut your hair. *(The sound of a truck stopping* is *heard from across the street.)*

THE GIRL *(softly, patiently, but firmly).* Mr. Van Dusen, I've decided to stay, and the first thing I've got to do is change my appearance. I don't fit into the scenery around here.

HARRY. Oh, I don't know. If I were a small boy going to school, I'd say you look just right.

THE GIRL. I You're just like the children. They don't take me seriously, either. They think I'm nothing more than a pretty girl who is going to give up in despair and go home. If you give me a poodle haircut I'll look more well, plain and simple. I plan to dress differently, too. I'm determined to teach here. You've got to help me. Now, Mr. Van Dusen, the shears, please.

HARRY. I'm sorry, Miss McCutcheon. There's no need to change your *appearance* at all.

[Clark Larrabee comes into the shop.]

HARRY. You're next, Clark. *(Harry helps Miss McCutcheon out of the chair. She gives him an angry glance.)* ,

THE GIRL *(whispering).* I won't forget this rudeness, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY *(also whispering).* Never whisper in O.K.-by-the-Sea. People- misunderstand. *(Loudly)* Good day, Miss.

[Miss McCutcheon opens her parasol with anger and leaves the shop. Clark Larrabee has scarcely noticed her. He stands looking at Harry's junk on the shelves.]

HARRY. Well, Clark, I haven't seen you in a long time.

CLARK. I'm just passing through, Harry. Thought I might run into Clay here.

HARRY. He was here a little while ago.

CLARK. How is he?

HARRY. He's fine, Clark.

CLARK. I been working in Salinas. Got a ride down in a truck. It's across the street now at the gasoline station.

HARRY. You've been home, of course?

CLARK. No, I haven't.

HARRY. Oh?

CLARK *(after a slight pause).* I've left Fay, Harry.

HARRY. You got time for a haircut, Clark?

CLARK. No thanks, Harry. I've got to go back to Salinas on that truck across the street.

HARRY. Clay's somewhere on the beach.

CLARK *(handing Harry three ten-dollar bills).* Give him this, will you? Thirty dollars. Don't tell him I gave it to you.

HARRY. Why not?

CLARK. I'd rather he didn't know I was around. Is he all right?

HARRY. Sure, Clark. They're *all* O.K. I mean.

CLARK. Tell him to take the money home to his mother. *(He picks up the newspaper,* The Gull.)

HARRY. Sure, Clark. It came out this morning. Take it along.

CLARK. Thanks. *(He puts the paper in his pocket.)* How've things been going with *you,* Harry?

HARRY. Oh, I can't kick. Two or three haircuts a day. A lot of time to read. A few laughs. A few surprises. The sea. The fishing. It's a good life.

CLARK. Keep an eye on Clay, will you? I mean-well, I h*ad* to do it.

HARRY. Sure.

CLARK. Yeah, well That's the first money I've been able to save. When I make some more, I'd like to send it here, so you can hand it to Clay, to take home.

HARRY. Anything you say, Clark. *(There* is *the sound of the truck's horn blowing.)*

CLARK. Well *(He goes to the door.)* Thanks, Harry, thanks a lot.

HARRY. Good seeing you, Clark.

[Clark Larrabee goes out. Harry watches him. A truck shifting gears is *heard, and then the sound of the truck driving off. Harry picks up a book, changes hats, sits down in the chair and begins to read. A man of forty or so, well-dressed, rather swift, comes in.]*

THE MAN. Where's the barber?

HARRY. I'm the barber.

THE MAN. Can I get a haircut, real quick?

HARRY *(getting out of the chair).* Depends on what you mean by real quick.

THE MAN *(sitting down).* Well, just a haircut then.

HARRY *(putting an apron around the man).* O.K. I don't believe I've seen you before.

THE MAN. No. They're changing the oil in my car across the street. Thought I'd step in here and get a haircut. Get it out of the way before I get to Hollywood. How many miles is it?

HARRY. About two hundred straight down the highway. You can't miss it.

THE MAN. What town is *this?*

HARRY. O.K.-by-the-Sea.

THE MAN. What do the people do here?

HARRY. Well, I cut hair. Friend of mine named Wozzeck repairs watches, radios, alarm clocks, and sells jewelry.

THE MAN. Who does he sell it to?

HARRY. The people here. It's imitation stuff mainly.

THE MAN. Factory here? Farms? Fishing?

HARRY. No. Just the few stores on the highway, the houses further back in the hills, the church, and the school. You a salesman?

THE MAN. No, I'm a writer.

HARRY. What do you write?

THE MAN. A little bit of everything. How about the haircut?

HARRY. You got to be in Hollywood tonight?

THE MAN. I don't have to be anywhere tonight, but that was the idea. Why?

HARRY. Well, I've always said a writer could step into a place like this, watch things a little while, and get a whole book out of it, or a. play.

THE MAN. Or if he was a poet, a sonnet.

HARRY. Do you like Shakespeare's?

THE MAN. They're just about the best in English.

HARRY. It's not often I get a writer in here. As a matter of fact you,re the only writer I've had in here in twenty years, not counting Fenton.

THE MAN. Who's he?

HARRY. Fenton Lockhart.

THE MAN. What does he write?

HARRY. He gets out the weekly paper. Writes the whole thing himself.

THE MAN. Yeah. Well How about the haircut? HARRY. O.K.

[Harry puts a hot towel around the man's head. Miss McCutcheon, carrying a cane chair without one leg and without a seat, comes in. With her is *Clay with some- thing in his hand, a smaller boy named Greeley with a bottle of sea water, and Roxanna with an assortment of shells.]*

CLAY. I got an oyster here, Mr. Van Dusen.

GREELEY. Miss McCutcheon claims there *ain't* a big pearl in it.

HARRY *(looking* at Miss *McCutcheon).* Is she willing to admit there's a *little* one in it?

GREELEY. I don't know. I know I got sea water in this bottle.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Mr. Van Dusen, Clay Larrabee seems to believe there's a pearl in this oyster he happens to have found on the beach. CLAY. I didn't *happen* to find it. I went looking for it. You know Black Rock, Mr. Van Dusen? Well, the tide hardly ever gets low enough for a fellow to get around to the ocean side of Black Rock, but a little while ago it did, so I went around there to that side. I got to poking around and I found this oyster.

HARRY. I've been here twenty-four years, Clay, and this is the first time I've ever heard of anybody finding an oyster on our beach-at Black Rock, or anywhere else.

CLAY. Well, *I did,* Mr. Van Dusen. It's shut tight, it's alive, and there's a pearl in it, worth at least three hundred dollars.

GREELEY. A *big* pearl.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Now, you children listen to me. It's never too soon for any of us to face the truth, which is supposed to set us free, not imprison us. The truth is, Clay, you want money because you need money. The truth is also that you have found an oyster. The truth is also that there is no pearl in the oyster.

GREELEY. How do you know? Did you look?

MISS McCUTCHEON. No, but neither did Clay, and inasmuch as only one oyster in a million has a pearl in it, truth favors the probability that this is not the millionth oyster ...the oyster with the pearl in it.

CLAY. There's a *big* pearl in the oyster.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Mr. Van Dusen, shall we open the oyster and show Clay and his sister Roxanna and their friend Greeley that there is no pearl in it?

HARRY. In a moment, Miss McCutcheon. And what's that *you* have?

MISS McCUTCHEON. A chair, as you see.

HARRY. How many legs does it have?

MISS McCUTCHEON. Three of course. I can count to three, I hope.

HARRY. What do you want with a chair with only three legs?

MISS McCUTCHEON. I'm going to bring things from the sea the same as everybody else in town.

HARRY. But everybody else in town *doesn't* bring things from the sea-":'just the children, Judge Applegarth, Fenton Lockhart, and myself.

MISS McCUTCHEON. In any case, the same as the children, Judge Applegarth, Fenton Lockhart, and you. Judge Applegarth? Who's he?

HARRY. He judged animals at a county fair one time, so we call him Judge.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Dogs or hounds?

HARRY. Hounds a little old-fashioned but I prefer it to dogs, and since both words mean the same thing-Well, I wouldn't care to call a man like Arthur Applegarth a dog's judge.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Did he actually judge dogs, as you prefer to put it, at a county fair-one time? Did he even do *that?*

HARRY. Nobody checked up. He *said* he did.

MISS McCUTCHEON. So that entitled him to be called Judge Applegarth?

HARRY. It certainly did.

MISS McCUTCHEON. On that basis, Clay's oyster has a big pearl in it because he *says* so, is that it?

HARRY. I didn't say that.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Are we living in the Middle Ages, Mr. Van Dusen?

GREELEY. No, this is 1953, Miss McCutcheon.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Yes, Greeley, and to illustrate what I mean that's water you have in that bottle. Nothing else.

GREELEY. *Sea* water.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Yes, but there's nothing else in the bottle.

GREELEY. No, but there's little things in *the water.* You can't see them now, but they'll show up later. The water of the sea is full of things.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Salt, perhaps.

GREELEY. No. *Living* things. If I look hard I can see some of them now.

MISS McCUTCHEON. You can *imagine* seeing them. Mr. Van Dusen, are you going to help me or not?

HARRY. What do you want me to do?

MIS& McCUTCHEON. Open the oyster of course, so Clay will see for himself that there's no pearl in it. So he'll begin to face reality, as he should, as each of us should.

HARRY. Clay, do you mind if I look at the oyster a minute?

CLAY *(handing the oyster to Harry).* There's a big pearl in it, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY *(examining the oyster).* Clay... Roxanna... Greeley... I wonder if you'd go down the street to Wozzeck's. Tell him to come here the first chance he gets. I'd rather *he* opened this oyster. I might damage the pearl.

CLAY, GREELEY, and ROXANNA. O.K., Mr. Van Dusen.

(They go out.)

MISS McCUTCHEON. What pearl? What in the world do you think you're trying to do to the minds of these children? How am I ever going to teach them the principles of truth with an influence like yours to fight against?

HARRY. Miss McCutcheon. The people of O.K.-by-the-Sea are all poor. Most of them can't afford to pay for the haircuts I give them. There's no excuse for this town at all, but the sea is here, and so are the hills. A few people find jobs a couple of months every year North or South, come back half dead of homesickness, and live on next to nothing the rest of the year. A few get pensions. Every family has a garden and a few chickens, and they make a few dollars selling vegetables and eggs. In a town of almost a thousand people there isn't one rich man. Not even one who is well off. And yet these people are the richest I have ever known. Clay doesn't really want money, as you seem to think. He wants his father to come home, and he thinks money will help get his father home. As a matter of fact his father is the man who stepped in here just as you were leaving. He left thirty dollars for me to give to Clay, to take home. His father and his mother haven't been getting along. Clark Larrabee's a fine man. He's not the town drunk or anything like that, but having four kids to provide for he gets to feeling ashamed of the showing he's making, and he starts drinking. He wants his kids to live in a good house of their own, wear good clothes, and all the other things fathers have always wanted for their kids. His wife wants these things for the kids, too. They don't have these things, so they fight. They had one too many fights about a month ago, so Clark went off-he's working in Salinas. He's either going to keep moving away from his family, or he's going to come back. It all depends on-well, I don't know what. This oyster maybe. Clay maybe. *(Softly)* You and me may be. *(There* is *a pause. He looks at the oyster. Miss McCutcheon looks at it, too.)* Clay believes there's a pearl in this oyster for the same reason you and I believe whatever *we* believe to keep *us* going.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Are you suggesting we play a trick on Clay, in order to carry out your mumbo-jumbo ideas?

HARRY. Well, maybe it is a trick. I know Wozzeck's got a few pretty good-sized cultivated pearls.

MISS McCUTCHEON. You plan to have Wozzeck pretend he has found a pearl in the oyster when he opens it, is that it?

HARRY. I plan to get three hundred dollars to Clay.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Do you *have* three hundred dollars? HARRY. Not quite.

MISS McCUTCHEON. What about the other children who need money? Do you plan to put pearls in oysters for them, too? Not just here in O.K.-by-the-Sea. Every where. This isn't the only town in the world where people are poor, where fathers and mothers fight, where families break up.

HARRY. No, it isn't, but it's the only town where I live.

MISS McCUTCHEON. I give up. What do you want me to do?

HARRY. Well, could you find it in your heart to be just a little less sure about things when you talk to the kids mean, the troubled ones? You can get Clay around to the truth easy enough just as soon as he gets his father home.

[Arthur Applegarth comes in.]

HARRY. Judge Applegarth, may I present Miss McCutcheon?

THE JUDGE *(removing his hat and bowing low).* An honor, Miss.

MISS McCUTCHEON. How do you do, Judge.

HARRV. Miss McCutcheon's the new teacher at school.

THE JUDGE. We are honored to have you. The children, the parents and the rest of us.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Thank you, Judge. *(To Harry, whispering)* I'll be back as soon as I change my clothes.

HARRY *(whispering).* I told you not to whisper.

MISS McCUTCHEON *(whispering).* I shall expect you to give me a poodle haircut.

HARRY *(whispering).* Are you out of your mind?

MISS McCUTCHEON *(aloud).* Good day, Judge.

THE JUDGE *(bowing).* Good day, Miss. *[While he is bent* *over he takes a good look at her knees, calves, ankles, and bowtied sandals. Miss McCutcheon goes out. Judge Applegarth looks from the door* to *Harry.)* ,

THE JUDGE. She won't last a month. HARRY. Why not?

THE JUDGE. Too pretty. Our school needs an old battle-axe,like the teachers we had when we went to school, not a bathing beauty. Well, Harry, what's new?

HARRY. Just the teacher, I guess.

THE JUDGE. You know, Harry, the beach isn't what it used to be not at all. I don't mind the competition we're getting from the kids. It's just that the quality of the stuff the sea's washing up isn't good any more. *(He goes to the door.)*

HARRY. I don't know. Clay Larrabee found an oyster this morning.

THE JUDGE. He did? Well, one oyster don't make a stew, Harry. On my way home I'll drop in and let you see what I find.

HARRY. O.K., Judge. *(The Judge goes out. Harry comes* to *life suddenly and becomes businesslike.)* Now, for the haircut! *(He removes the towel he had wrapped around the writer's head.)*

THE JUDGE. Take your time.

HARRY. *(He examines the shears, clippers, and combs.)* Let's see now. *(The writer turns and watches. A gasoline station attendant comes to the door.)*

THE ATTENDANT *(to the writer)*. Just wanted to say your car's ready now.

THE WRITER. Thanks. *(The attendant goes Oltt.)* Look. I'll tell you what. How much is a haircut?

HARRY. Well, the regular price is a dollar. It's too much for a haircut, though, so I generally take a half or a quarter.

THE WRITER *(getting out of the chair).* I've changed my mind. I don't want a haircut after all, but here's a dollar just the same. *(He hands Harry a dollar, and he himself removes the apron.)*

HARRY. It won't take a minute.

THE WRITER. I know.

HARRY. You don't have to pay me a dollar for a hot towel. My compliments.

THE WRITER. That's O.K. *(He goes to the door.)*

HARRY. Well, take it easy now.

THE WRITER. Thanks. *(He stands a moment, thinking, then turns.)* Do you mind if I have a look at that oyster?

HARRY. Not at all.

[The writer goes to the shelf where Harry has placed the oyster, picks it up, looks at it thoughtfully, puts it back without comment, but instead of leaving the shop he looks around at the stuff in it. He then sits down on a wicker chair in the corner, and lights a cigarette.]

THE WRITER. You know, they've got a gadget in New York now like a safety razor that anybody can give anybody else a haircut with.

HARRY. They have?

THE WRITER. Yeah, there was a full-page ad about it in last Sunday's *Times.*

HARRY. Is that where you were last Sunday?

THE WRITER. Yeah.

HARRY. You been doing a lot of driving.

THE WRITER. I like to drive. I don't know, though-those gadgets don't always work. They're asking two- ninety-five for it. You take a big family. The father could save a lot of money giving his kids a haircut.

HARRY. Sounds like a great idea.

THE WRITER. Question of effectiveness. If the father gives the boy a haircut the boy's ashamed of, well, that's not so good.

HARRY. No, a boy likes to get a professional-looking haircut all right.

THE WRITER. I thought I'd buy one, but I don't know.

HARRY. You got a big family?

THE WRITER. I mean for myself. But I don't know-there's something to be said for going to a barber shop once in a while. No use putting the barbers out of business.

HARRY. Sounds like a pretty good article, though.

THE WRITER *(getting* up *lazily).* Well, it's been nice talking to you.

[Wozzeck, carrying a satchel, comes in, *followed* by *Clay, Roxanna, and Greeley.}*

WOZZECK. What's this all about, Harry?

HARRY. I've *got* an oyster I want you to open.

WOZZECK. That's what the kids have been telling me.

ROXANNA. *He* doesn't believe there's a pearl in the oyster, either.

WOZZECK. Of course not! What foolishness!

CLAY. There's a *big* pearl in it.

WOZZECK. O:K., give me the oyster. I'll open it. Expert watch repairer, to open an oyster!

HARRY. How much is a big pearl worth, Louie?

WOZZECK. Oh, a hundred. Two hundred, maybe.

HARRY. A very *big* one? I WOZZECK. Three, maybe.

THE WRITER. I'v~ looked at that oyster, and I'd like to buy it. *(To Clay)* How much do you want for it? CLAY. I don't know.

THE WRITER. How about three hundred?

GREELEY. Three hundred dollars?

CLAY. Is it all right, Mr. Van Dusen?

HARRY. *(He looks at the writer, who nods.)* Sure it's all right.

[The writer hands Clay the money.]

CLAY *(looking at the money and then at the writer).* But suppose there ain't a pearl in it?

THE WRITER. There *is,* though.

WOZZECK. Don't you want to open it first?

THE WRITER. No, I want the whole thing. I don't think the pearl's stopped growing.

CLAY. He says there is a pearl in the oyster, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY. I think there is, too, Clay; so why don't *you* just go on home and give the money *to* your mother?

CLAY. Well... I *knew* I was going to find something good today! *(The children go out. Wozzeck* is *bewildered.)*

WOZZECK. Three hundred dollars! How do you know there's a pearl in it?

THE WRITER. As far as I:m concerned, the whole thing's a pearl.

WOZZECK *(a little confused).* Well, I got to get back to the shop, Harry.

HARRY. Thanks for coming by.

[Wozzeck goes out. The writer holds the oyster in front of him as if it were an egg, and looks at it carefully, turning it in his fingers. As he is doing so, Clark Larrabee comes into the shop. He is holding the copy of the newspaper that Harry gave him.]

CLARK. We were ten miles up the highway when I happened to see this classified ad in the paper. *(He hands the paper to Harry and sits down in the chair.)* I'm going out to the house, after all. Just for the weekend of course, then back to work in Salinas again. Two or three months, I think I'll have enough to come back for a long time. Clay come by?

HARRY. No, I've got the money here.

CLARK. O.K. I'll take it out myself, but first let me have the works-shave, haircut, shampoo, massage.

HARRY *(putting an apron on Clark).* Sure thing, Clark. *(He bends the chair back, and begins to lather Clark's face. Miss McCutcheon, dressed neatly, looking like another person almost, comes in.)*

MISS McCUTCHEON. Well?

HARRY. You look fine, Miss McCutcheon.

MISS McCUTCHEON. I don't mean that. I mean the oyster.

HARRY. Oh, that! There *was* a pearl in it.

MISS McCUTCHEON. I don't believe it.

HARRY. A *big* pearl.

MISS McCUTCHEON. You might have done me the courtesy of waiting until I had come back before opening it.

HARRY. Couldn't wait.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Well, I don't believe you, but I've come for my haircut. I'll sit down and wait my turn.

HARRY. Mr. Larrabee wants the works. You'll have to wait a long time.

MISS McCUTCHEON. Mr. Larrabee? Clay's father? Roxanna's father? *(Clark sits up.)*

HARRY. Clark, I'd like you to meet our new teacher, Miss McCutcheon.

CLARK. How do you do.

MISS McCUTCHEON. How do you do, Mr. Larrabee. *(She looks bewildered.)* Well, perhaps some other time, then, Mr. Van Dusen. *(She goes out. Clark sits back. Judge Applegarth stops at the doorway of the shop.)*

THE JUDGE. Not one thing on the beach, Harry. Not a blessed thing worth picking up and taking home. *(Judge Applegarth goes on The writer looks at Harry.)*

HARRY. See what I mean?

THE WRITER. Yeah. Well... so long. *(He puts the oyster in his coat pocket.)*

HARRY. Drop in again any time you're driving to Hollywood.

THE WRITER. Or away. *(He goes out.)*

CLARK *(after a moment)*. You know, Harry, that boy of mine, Clay... well, a fellow like that, you can't just go off and leave him.

HARRY. Of course you can't, Clark.

CLARK. I'm taking him fishing tomorrow morning. How about going along, Harry?

HARRY. Sure, Clark. Be like old times again. *(There is a pause.)*

CLARK. What's all this about an oyster and a pearl?
HARRY. Oh, just having a little fun with the new teacher. You know, she came in here and asked me to give her a poodle haircut? A poodle haircut! I don't remember what a poodle *dog* looks like, even.

I. Write short answer to the these questions.

1. Where does the play take place?
2. Why is Harry sitting in the barber's chair?
3. According to Harry, how does one bring merriment to the tired old human heart?
4. What is Harry's philosophy?
5. How much did Harry pay for his barber shop? How long has he been in O.K.-by-the-Sea?
6. How many barbers are there in O.K.-by-the-Sea?
7. How much does Harry charge for haircuts?
8. Where is Clay going?
9. Why does Clay need money?
10. What has happened to Clay's father?
11. What does Clay want to put in the local newspaper?
12. Who is Miss McCutcheon? How does she feel about her job?
13. What is Miss McCutcheon looking for? How does she feel about the children of the town?

14. What does Harry advise her to do?
15. What kind of haircut does Miss McCutcheon want?
16. Can Harry give a poodle haircut?
17. What does Miss McCutcheon think that a poodle haircut will do for her appearance?
18. Where has Clark Larrabee been? How did he get to O.K.-by-the-Sea?
19. What does Clark give Harry? For what purpose?
20. How far is it to Hollywood from O.K.-by-the-Sea?
21. What work does the Man do?
22. What did Clay find near Black Rock?
23. What does Clay believe is in the oyster? How much is it worth?
24. Does Miss McCutcheon believe that there is a pearl in the oyster?
25. Why does Miss McCutcheon have a chair with three legs?
26. What kind of judge is Judge Applegarth?
27. What year is it?
28. What does Greeley have in a bottle?
29. Who suggests that they open the oyster?
30. Why do they want Wozzeck to come?
31. How does Harry describe the inhabitants of O.K.-by-the-Sea?
32. How does Miss McCutcheon view Harry's thinking about the pearl in the oyster?
33. Why does the Judge think that Miss McCutcheon will not last as a teacher? What kind of teacher does he think is needed?
34. What is Applegarth's complaint about the sea?

35. What kind of gadget does the writer describe?
36. Who buys the oyster? How much does he pay?
37. Does the writer open the oyster? Why not?
38. Why does Clark Larrabee return?
39. What does the writer do with the oyster?

II. Questions for discussion

1. Do you think that it is right to allow Clay to believe that there is a pearl in the oyster? Explain your answer.
2. In your opinion, why is the writer willing to buy the pearl? What has he received in return? What does he mean by saying: "As far as I'm concerned, the whole thing's a pearl."
3. What has attracted Harry and other people to O.K.-by-the-Sea? Is it the kind of town that appeals to you? Do you think that it resembles an ideal town? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Harry's philosophy is Take-it-easy (Relax-and-enjoy-life) kind. How does that philosophy appeal to you? Why or why not? Do you think that this philosophy works easier in small towns than in large cities? Explain.
5. In your opinion, does the play reveal the author's view of life? If so, what is his view of life?
6. Would you call this play one of action? Why or why not? How would you describe the play to a friend?
7. Do you think that this would be a good play to produce? Why or why not?

IIII. WHO SAID IT?

Who said the following?

1. Identify the speaker.

2. Who said these lines, to whom and on what occasion.
3. Tell something about the speaker's personal appearance or characteristics.
    a. "At the same time I have a feeling I ought to stay."
    b. "There's no excuse for this town at all, 'but the sea is here and so are the hills."
    c. "....Clay....well, a fellow like that, you can't just go off and leave him."
    d. "It's shut tight, it's alive, and there's a pearl in it, worth at least three hundred dollars."
    e. "It's never too soon for any of us to face the truth, which is supposed to set us free, not imprison us."
    f. "Our school needs an old battle-ax, like the teachers we had when we went to school, not a bathing beauty."

IV. OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Write a composition of 100 – 150 words explaining why you liked, or did not like, this play.
2. Write a composition describing your ideal town.

V. LANGUAGE NOTES – Some of the idiomatic or colloquial expressions found in the play are explained below, in the order in which they occur.

1. You may turn out to be – You may become
2. stuff – anything; something
3. threw in the haircut – included the haircut free
4. ever since – since that time
5. fair and square – honest; just

6. now and then – sometimes
7. pretty good – quite good; better than average
8. let me get this straight – I need to understand the situation (better)
9. He just picked up and went off. – He simply left home without telling anyone.
10. Enough's enough. – That's the end of the matter.
11. ain't – isn't; aren't
12. safe and sound – safe from harm, injury, loss, etc.
13. Let bygones be bygones. – Forget the past.
14. at any rate – in any case; at least
15. has knocked me for a loop – has overwhelmed or defeated me
16. on top of that – in addition
17. while the going's good – while there's still a chance or conditions are favourable
18. thought I might run into – I thought that I would see or meet
19. I'd rather he didn't know I was around. – I prefer that he does not know that I was in the vicinity or area.
20. I can't kick. – I have no reason to complain.
21. Keep an eye on – Watch over; look after the welfare of
22. Get it out of the way – Complete the task (job) beforehand
23. He gets out the weekly paper. – He publishes the weekly newspaper.
24. Well off – rich; wealthy
25. As a matter of fact – To tell the truth; be truthful

26. mumbo-jumbo – confusing or without meaning
27. Are you out of your mind? Are you crazy (insane)?
28. old battleaxe – person who establishes strong discipline (in this case, more experienced teacher)
29. drop in – stop by; pay a short visit
30. gadget – aseful device
31. Yeah – Yes; that’s right

Poem No. 1

THE RAIN

I hear leaves drinking rain;
I hear rich leaves on top
Giving the poor beneath
Drop after drop;
'Tis a sweet noise to hear
These green leaves drinking near.

And when the Sun comes out,
After this rain shall stop,
A wondrous light will fill
Each dark, round drop;
I hope the Sun shines bright;
It will be a lovely sight.

(W.H. Davies)

About the Author

W.H. Davies is an English poet born in 1871 at Wales and died in 1940. He left school at a young age, and lived for a number of years as a peddler and a beggar in USA and England. His first attempt of poetry *'The Soul's Destroyer* (1905) was printed at his own expense. It won the attention of G.B. Shaw. Davies was a prolific poet; his favourite themes were nature and the hardships of the poor.

Theme

The poem is a musical display of rain, a great phenomena of nature, and the life of a poor man who has no alternative except to suffer in the wet cold weather; and the sweet noise of the drops of rain bring no relief for him. However, the scene of the sunshine after the rain is lovely and is a source of pleasure.

Paraphrase

The poet says that he hears the leaves which are full of rain. He says that the rich leaves on top are full of water. The sprinkling of water which falls drop by drop on the leaves below creates a music which is sweet to hear. But the poor man sitting under the tree suffers in wet cold weather.

When the sun appears again after the rain stops, the beautiful light brightens up and sparkles each drop. "In the end the poet says I wish that the sun shines in full brightness and makes the scene lovely."

Reading Notes

leaves drinking rain	the sound of rain falling on leaves gives one the impression as if leaves are drinking water with gulping sound.
giving the poor beneath drop after drop	this line shows the miserable condition of the poor man sitting under the tree in rain. The sweet noise of the drops of rain brings no relief for him.

EXERCISES

1. **Choose the correct answer.**

i. Who was drinking rain?
a) a man b) a bird
c) the leaves d) a tree

ii. Who was sitting under the tree?
a) the poet b) a poor man
c) a bird d) a dog

iii. What was making the noise sweet?
a) a guitar
b) a singer
c) drops of rain
d) drops of rain falling on leaves

iv. When did the sun come out?
a) in the morning
b) in the noon
c) in the clouds
d) when the rain would stop

v. The round drops are brightened by
a) sunshine b) colour
c) moonlight d) star light

2. Some of the statements are true and some are false. Choose the false statements and tell why they are incorrect.

i. The poet hears leaves drinking rain.
ii. The rain drops make the leaves rich.
iii. The rain is also enjoyable by the poor.
iv. The green leaves drinking water create a noise.
v. The sunshine darkens the round drops of rain.
vi. The sunshine, after the rain, makes the scene lovely.

3. a. Add two more rhyming words in each line.

i. leave, ________, ________
ii. drop, ________, ________
iii. rain, ________, ________

4. Write a critical appreciation of the poem.

5. How can a rainy day be enjoyed?

6. Explain the first stanza with reference to the context.

Poem No. 2

NIGHT MAIL.

This is the Night Mail crossing the Border,
Bringing the cheque and the postal order,

Letters for the rich, letters for the poor,
The shop at the corner, the girl next door.

Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb;
The gradient's against her, but she's on time.

Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder,
Shovelling white steam over her shoulder,

Snorting noisily, she passes
Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.

Birds turn their heads as she approaches,
Stare from bushes at her blank-faced coaches.

Sheep-dogs cannot turn her course;
They slumber on with paws across

In the farm she passes; no one wakes,
But a jug in a bedroom gently shakes.

(W. H. Auden)

About the Author

W.H. Auden was born in 1907, educated at Oxford. He taught in England and Scotland for sometime. He wrote poetry, won fame in political and social circles. Among his famous volumes of verse are: *Look Stranger* (1936), *Another Time* (1940), *The Age of Anxiety* (1948). Auden showed a deep interest in language and metaphor, satire and parody which are often dazzling and sometimes cruel. He is lively and provocative, skilled and ingenious.

Theme

The poet describes the journey of a coach that travels all night to bring mail containing letters, postal orders, cheques for people living in various parts of the land.

Sometimes the journey is a steep upward climb, sometimes it runs steadily on plain.

Whether the railway track is upward ascent or is a sloping descent, the night mail is always on time and follows the time schedule.

The grassland, cotton fields, moorland and the white clouds above all pass by quickly and swiftly.

The birds stare at the approaching coach from their nests but the sheep dog unmindful of the noise of the mail coach continues to slumber.

No one wakes up from slumber. Only a jug gently shakes as the coach passes by a farm.

Reading Notes

border	boundary
gradient's	degree of ascent or descent on a rail-road
boulder	rounded stone, small hill
shovelled	threw off
slumber	Sleep

EXERCISES

1. Choose the correct answer.

i. The Night Mail is
   a) an express train
   b) a passenger train
   c) a train that carries mail

ii. The Night Mail brings letters for the girl next door means that it brings
   a) formal letters
   b) love letters
   c) informal letters

iii. The Night Mail reaches
   a) in time
   b) on time
   c) before time

iv. On the arrival of Night Mail the birds are
   a) frightened
   b) pleased
   c) flown away

v. Why do the sheep-dogs continue to sleep on the arrival of the train? Because it can't
   a) attack it
   b) bite it
   c) change its course

2. Mark the statements true or false.

i. The Night Mail travels by day.
ii. It brings flowers and presents for the girls.
iii. It brings letters for the rich and the poor.
iv. It snorts noisily like a horse.
v. It disturbs the life on farms.

vi. The children peep from bushes at her blank faced coaches.

3. Write two more rhymed words in each line, e.g girl: pearl, curl.

i. mail, ______, ______
ii. night, ______, ______
iii. letter, ______, ______

Poem No. 3

LOVELIEST OF TREES, THE CHERRY NOW

Loveliest of trees the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Easter tide.

Now, of my three score years and ten
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy Springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty Springs are little room,
About the woodland I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

(A. E. Housman)

About the Author

A.E.Housman (1859-1936) studied at Oxford and published learned articles on classical authors. He spent his life in teaching and editing the works of a minor Roman Poet. He also wrote scholarly reviews. His poems are in three separate volumes written between 1895 and 1905.

His poems express simple, universal emotions –love of nature, nostalgia for the past, the pathos of man's brief existence---in senses and narratives that are easy to understand. His style derives from the old ballads and from classical poetry. Together with his pessimism and irony, which can be savage, the formal qualities of his style keep his intense emotion from seeming sentimental.

Theme

The beauty of nature, especially of cherry is captivating. But life is too short to relish it. Even fifty years are not enough to enjoy it fully. The poet says that one should not miss any chance of enjoying the bloom of the 'loveliest of trees', the cherry, in the woods in all seasons.

Paraphrase

Cherry, which is the loveliest of the trees, is now in full bloom and its branches are bending down loaded with flowers. It stands along the path in the wood and is all covered in snow. According to the poet, the cherry stands in a white dress in preparation for the celebration of Easter.

The poet says that out of the seventy years of his life, the first twenty years will never come again. The rest of his life of fifty years he claims to have enjoyed the beauty of cherry blossom in fifty springs – the season when this tree blossoms.

Since fifty years are not sufficient and long enough to enjoy the beauty of the Spring, coloured and flavoured by the glory of cherry tree, the poet will miss no chance to go to the woodland to see the exotic beauty of the cherry tree whose flowery boughs are hanging down with snow.

Reading Notes

hung with bloom	loaded with flowers
Easter	anniversary of the Resurrection of Christ, observed on the first Sunday after a full moon on or after 21 March.
three score years and ten	three sets of twenty and ten mean seventy years.
little room	short life.

EXERCISES

1. Choose the correct answer.

i. The tree of cherry is the loveliest in
a) winter b) spring
c) summer d) autumn

ii. Easter is a festival of
a) Christians b) Muslims
c) Hindus d) Sikhs

iii. The tree of cherry is dressed in which colour.
a) pink b) red
c) yellow d) white

iv. Three score years and ten are
a) forty years b) fifty years
c) sixty years d) seventy years

v. Out of the life of the poet how many years would not come again.
a) ten b) twenty
c) thirty d) forty

vi. Cherry tree glorifies

a) the life b) mind and thought

c) the city d) the environment

2. Mark the statements true or false.

i. Cherry is a flower and not a fruit.

ii. The tree of cherry is the loveliest in Autumn.

iii. The colour of the flower of cherry is blue.

iv. Seventy years are sufficient to cherish the beauty of cherry tree.

v. The cherry blooms in winter.

vi. Cherry stands about the woodland ride.

vii. Cherry adds to the glory of Easter.

viii. "To see the cherry hung with snow" is not worth seeing.

ix. The cherry tree makes woodland a haunted land.

x. The cherry tree is a feast of eyes.

3. Add two more rhymed words in each line

1. cherry, ________, ________
2. hung, ________, ________
3. springs, ________, ________

4. Which fruit is mentioned in the poem?

5. What time of the year is mentioned in the first stanza?

6. Read the second stanza carefully and write how old is the poet?

7. What is the poet saying in the last stanza of the poem?

Poem No. 4

O Where are You Going?

"O where are you going?" said reader to rider,
"That valley is fatal when furnaces burn,
Yonder's the midden whose odours will madden,
That gap is the grave where the tall return.

"O do you imagine," said fearer to farer,
"That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,
Your diligent looking discover the lacking
Your footsteps feel from granite to grass?"

"O what was that bird," said horror to hearer,
"Did you see that shape in the twisted trees?
Behind you swiftly the figure comes softly,
The spot on your skin is a shocking disease?"

"Out of this house" – said rider to reader,
"Yours never will" – said farer to fearer,
"They're looking for you" – said hearer to horror,
As he left them there, as he left them there.

Theme

The poem is a dialogue between two imaginary persons personified as Reader and Rider. The Rider is a person who is bold, courageous and is ambitious to make his way through thick and thin.

The Reader full of awe and reverence tells him that the valley beyond is full of dangers and that heaps of dung and rubbish lie on his journey ahead whose bad smell sickens and maddens the mind.

The opposite force is working at discouraging the traveller from going beyond. You may go farther and fare worse, the reader suggests. Fear and horror are trying to discourage the rider from going on his path.

The way to glory and success is vague and uncertain, but it can be paved through with courage and perseverance.

Reading Notes

fatal	causing or ending in death
midden	dung hill, refuse heap
odours	smell which is bad
diligent	hard working
granite	granular crystalline rock of quartz, mica etc.
dusk	the darker stage of twilight
horror	intense feeling of fear

EXERCISES

1. **Give a summary of the poem in your own words.**
2. **Answer the following questions**
    - i. What kind of feelings does the poet create in the minds of the readers?
    - i. What do you feel after reading the poem?
    - ii. What does the title of the poem signify?
    - iii. Write down the rhyming words in the poem.
    - iv. Explain the third stanza of the poem in your own words.
3. **Tick the statement True / False.**
    - a. The valley is fatal when the furnaces burn. T/F
    - b. That dusk will not delay on your path to the pass. T/F
    - c. Your footsteps feel from granite to grass. T/F
    - d. The spot on your skin is a shocking disease. T/F

Poem No. 5

In the Street of the Fruit Stalls

Wicks balance flame, a dark dew falls
In the street of the fruit stalls
Melon, guava, mandarin,
Pyramid-piled like cannon balls,
Glow red-hot, gold-hot, from within.

Dark children with a coin to spend
Enter the lantern's orbit; find
Melon, guava, mandarin-
The moon compacted to a rind,
The sun in a pitted skin.

They take it, break it open, let
A gold or silver fountain wet
Mouth, fingers, cheek, nose, chin:
Radiant as lanterns, they forget
The dark street I am standing in.

Jan Stallworthy

Paraphrase

It is the evening time. It is wet and dark. There is a street of fruit sellers where various fruits are piled up in a conical form. They reflect hot, red and golden colours which in dim lantern light look like bombs. Poor children come there with a coin and stand in the light of the lanterns. They look at melon, guava and other fruits. Their mouths water. They pick up a fruit and break it open. Juice comes out and pours into their mouths and also sticks on their fingers and cheeks. They enjoy the fruit and are least conscious of the surrounding which is disturbing the poet.

Theme

This is a symbolic poem. The world is threatened with war, misery and poverty. But all these have failed to crush man's love for pleasure. Children enjoy the sweet spray of the juice forgetting all about the misery they live in.

Vocabulary

guava	a fruit of the tropical American tree with a light yellow skin and pink or white edible flesh.
mandarin	a type of small orange with a loose skin.
rind	the hard outer skin of certain fruits.
wick	a length of string in the center of a candle.
pyramid	a large stone structure with a flat square or triangular base and sloping sides that meet in a point at the top.

EXERCISES

1. **Choose the correct answer. The options are given below:**

i. Which fruit has not been mentioned in the poem?

a) mango b) melon

c) guava d) mandarin

ii. The fruits resembled the _____.

a) vegetables b) cannon balls

c) bullets d) biscuits

iii. It was a _____ street.

a) dark b) bright

c) airy d) blind

iv. The children were _____.

a) pale b) dark

c) white d) yellow

2. Tick the statements True / False.

i. No fruit has been mentioned in the poem. T/F

ii. The children did not want to buy the fruit. T/F

iii. The children were holding coins in their hands. T/F

iv. They ate the fruits with relish. T/F

3. Add two rhyming words to each of the words given below.

i. falls ______ ______

ii. spend ______ ______

iii. skin ______ ______

iv. forget ______ ______

4. Write down the missing word in each verse. The options are given below:

i. Wicks balance flame, a dark dew _____.

a) falls b) calls

c) moves d) comes

ii. Pyramid-piled like cannon _____.

a) bullets b) balls

c) guns d) spears

iii. The sun in a pitted _____.

a) skin b) rim

c) arm d) leg

iv. The dark street I am standing _____.

a) out b) in

c) into d) on

5. **Write a critical note on the poem.**
6. **Give a summary of the poem in your own words.**
7. **What are the feelings of the poet standing in the dark?**
8. **Why has the poet used 'cannon balls' to describe the fruits.**
9. **Paraphrase the last stanza of five lines in your own words.**
10. **Make a list of all fruit mentioned in the poem.**

Poem No. 6

SINDHI WOMEN

Bare foot, through the bazaar,
And with the same undulant grace
As the cloth blown back from her face,
She glides with a stone jar,
High on her head
And not a ripple in her tread.

Watching her cross erect
Stones, garbage, excrement and crumbs
Of glass in the Karachi slums,
I, with my stoop, reflect:
They stand most straight
Who learn to walk beneath a weight.

(Jan Stallworthy)

Paraphrase

A Sindhi woman is going through a bazaar with bare feet. She is walking impressively and there is a rhythm in her movement which can be seen in her swaying body and floating dress. The wind pushes the cloth from her face. She is carrying a stone jar on her head. She walks as smoothly as the wave of a stream. She is going through stones, garbage and the pieces of bread as well as the broken glass. This is the scene of a Karachi slum. The poet meditates and sees his own body that is bent by time. He observes that only those who bear the burden of life and carry its hardships through life are strong and straight.

Theme

This poem is a tribute to work. It creates rhythm in life. Work keeps man strong and vigilant. An idle man will soon decay. This poem also gives a very realistic picture of the slum of Karachi in a few words. The poet praises and appreciates the working woman who has practically turned her work into art. The woman walks softly with the delicacy and rhythm of a dancer's feet.

undulant	:	wave like motion or look
glide	:	move along smoothly
tread	:	walk
garbage	:	waste, worthless or rubbish
excrement	:	waste matter expelled from the body
crumbs	:	small pieces of dry food
slums	:	street of small houses
stoop	:	bend forward / down wards

EXERCISES

1. **Add two rhyming words in the blanks with each word.**
   a) grace ______ ______
   b) tread ______ ______
   c) crumbs______ ______
   d) weight ______ ______
2. **Write down the missing rhymed words in each verse. The options are given below.**
   a) High on her______.
      (i) red (ii) head
      (iii) body (iv) foot
   b) As the cloth blown back from her _____.
      (i) mouth (ii) head
      (iii) face (iv) hair
   c) Watching her cross _____.
      (i) bridge (ii) street
      (iii) road (iv) erect
   d) I, with my stoop, ______.
      (i) walk (ii) run
      (iii) think (iv) reflect

3. Give a summary of the poem in your own words.

4. What did the poet reflect when he saw the woman?

5. What is the main idea of the poem?

6. What kind of a picture of the Karachi slums do we get after reading the poem?

7. Choose the correct answer. The options are given below:

a) The woman in the poem was passing through the _____.
   (i) market (ii) bazaar
   (iii) crowd (iv) street

b) She was carrying a _____ on her head.
   (i) a bundle of sticks
   (ii) a stone jar
   (iii) a bundle of books
   (iv) nothing

c) Those who carry weight stand _____.
   (i) straight (ii) bend
   (iii) idle (iv) fall

d) Her walk was _____.
   (i) smooth (ii) difficult
   (iii) slow (iv) fast

8. Tick the True / False statement.

a) She was bare footed. T/F
b) She had a stone jar on her head. T/F
c) She was a Baluchi woman. T/F
d) She did not have a ripple in her walk. T/F

Poem No. 7

TIMES

To every thing there is a season,
And a time to every purpose under the heaven;
A time to be born,
And a time to die;
A time to plant,
And a time to pluck up that which is planted….
A time to break down,
And a time to build up;
A time to weep,
And a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones,
And a time to gather stones together;
A time to embrace,
And a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to get,
And a time to lose;
A time to keep,
And a time to cast away;
A time to rend,
And a time to sew;
A time to keep silence,
And a time to speak. ….

(Ecclesiastes)

Theme

It is true that everything happens at an appropriate time. There is time when winters set in and a time when winters are gone and another season sets in.

No body is born before time – nor dies before time. There is a time to sow seeds and a time when its fruit is ripe to be plucked.

The author says that nothing in this world happens out of place. Every thing is scheduled according to a specific time.

EXERCISES

I. Explain the message in the first eight lines of the poem in your own words.

II. Read the poem and complete the lines.

a) A time to be born
And a time to _____.

b) A time to break down
And a time to _____.

c) A time to laugh
And a time to _____.

d) A time to get
And a time to _____.

e) A time to keep silence
And a time to _____.

III. Silence is opposite to speech. Write down the opposites of these words.

i. born ______ ii. heaven _____
iii. live ______ iv. lose _____
v. weep _____ vi. break ______

IV. Write in your own words the central theme of the poem.

Poem No. 8

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert …. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

(Percy Bysshe Shelley)

About the Author/Poet

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 – 1822) English romantic poet. Much of his first work, e.g. the 'Ode to the West Wind" was written in the last years of his life. He died in a storm at sea after visiting Lord Byron, another great poet. Shelley's works show his remarkable lyrical gift, his originality and his hatred of oppression. He was a great revolutionary poet of his time.

Paraphrase

The poet meets a traveller from an ancient country. He told him that he saw two huge, trunkless legs made of stone. Those legs were standing in a desert. Near these legs there was lying the broken body of a man half sunk in the sand. His features gave the impression that he was very proud and contemptuous of others. The artist has beautifully recreated these impressions in the face of stone. One could see that he was proud and heartless. At the bottom of the statue were inscribed these woods "My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" In the desert there remains nothing except this broken statue.

Theme

It is a very ironic poem which describes the pride of man and the wretched reality of his life. Man becomes proud by success. He thinks that he has toppled the world. He forgets that life is merciless. Time brings end to all leisures of man, and death is a great leveller. Shelley believes that all feelings of superiority in man is only an illusion and a self-deception.

Vocabulary

antique	old and valuable, belonging to the past. very old
trunkless	without the main part of the human body apart from the head arms and legs.
visage	a person's face
frown	to show anger, worry or deep thought
wrinkled	having or showing wrinkles.
sculptor	a person who makes sculptures
mock	to laugh at, make fun of
pedestal	the base of a statue
colossal	very large, huge; immense
wreck	something which is damaged

EXERCISES

1. **Choose the correct answer.**

i. The traveller saw a _____ in the desert

a) snake b) statue

c) camel d) water

ii. The poet met a ______.

a) traveller b) sailor
c) beggar d) captain

iii. His name was written on the ______.

a) face b) body
c) pedestal d) wood

iv. The wreck of the statue was ______.

a) colossal b) small
c) big d) little

2. **Tick the Statements True / False.**

i. The traveller belonged to an ancient country. T/F
ii. The traveller saw nothing in the desert. T/F
iii. Nothing was written on the pedestal of the statue. T/ F
iv. Ozymandias was a prince. T/F

3. **Add two rhyming words to each word given below.**

i. land ________ ________
ii. stone ________ ________
iii. decay ________ ________
iv. fed ________ ________

4. **Write down the missing word in each verse. Options are given below.**

i. I met a traveller from an antique ______.

a) sand b) band
c) land d) hand

ii. Two vast and trunkless legs of stone stand in the ______.

a) jungle b) forest
c) hill d) ground

iii. My name is Ozymandias, king of ______.

a) state b) America
c) kings d) Rome

iv. Of that colossal wreck, boundless and _____.

a)	bare	b)	rare
c)	uncovered	d)	headless

5. Give a summary of the poem.

6. What kind of feelings does the poem create in the reader's mind?

7. What did the traveller see in the desert?

Poem No. 9

THE FEED

Holding a grain of millet in her beak
The mother sparrow has come to feed.
The young ones are so tiny and small
From head to toe they are beaks
When they cry.
One grain to be fed to the ten young ones

To whom the mother sparrow should feed?
Conjoining beak with beak
With whom should she solace?
Fissuring the atom,
You have learnt to weep and wail in a loud tone,
Splitting the grain,
You have learnt to set life on foot
Could you split the grain?
One grain to be fed to the ten young ones.

(Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi)

About the Author

Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi is a Pakistani poet and has written several poems in Urdu and also in English. He was born in 1916 in a small village Anga in Sargodha District. He is a living writer and a poet. He started writing poems in the late thirties. He has published more than a dozen books. Some of his works have also been translated into foreign languages which have won applause in foreign countries of the world.

Theme

This poem is very simple. Here the poet depicts the love of a mother for her young ones who are very small and are only a few days old. The new born are in the nest. The mother sparrow goes out and brings a grain of millet in her beak to feed them. They are ten in number.

Reading Notes

millet	a small grain of a cereal.
tiny	small
conjoining	join, combine
fissuring	opening, split, crack
split	break

EXERCISES

1. Answer the following questions.

i. What does the sparrow hold in her beak?
i. Which line in the first stanza tells us that the young ones have no feathers?
ii. How many young ones are to be fed?
iii. What has the poet described in the poem?

2. Choose the correct answer.

i. What was the mother sparrow holding in her beak?
a) wheat b) rice
c) millet d) maize

ii. The young ones are tiny and _____
a) big b) small
c) white d) black

iii. How many young ones are there in the nest?
a) Three b) ten
c) twelve d) nine

iv. Name the bird that has come to feed her young ones.
a) crow b) pigeon
c) sparrow d) parrot

3. **Read the poem and write down the missing word in each line.**
    - i) From head to toe they are _____.
    - ii) The mother sparrow has come to _____.
    - iii) One grain to be fed to the ____ young ones.
4. **Mark the statements true or false.**
    - i) The young ones are tiny and small.
    - ii) The mother sparrow holds a grain of rice in her beak.
    - iii) The young ones do not weep and wail in a loud tone.
    - iv) One grain is to be fed to the six young ones.
5. **Explain the last three lines with reference to the context.**
6. **Write a critical appreciation of the poem.**
7. **What do you feel after reading the poem?**

Poem No. 10

THE HOLLOW MEN

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Learning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom
Remember us – if at all – not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men

(T. S. Eliot)

About the Author

Thomas Streams Eliot (1888 – 1965) American born British was a poet,playwright and critic. He settled in Britain. He is well-known for his great poems such as The Waste Land and Four Quartets. He also wrote plays and contributed critical essays.

Paraphrase

We are worthless men, either puppets or dolls. We try to rest upon each other and our minds are filled with no wisdom. We are not wise men. We live in dreams. We try to speak to each other but convey nothing. All our speech is no more than the voices made by the grass or the rats. We seem to have no form and no colour. We seem to have strength, but it is only the appearance of strength otherwise we are weak and without motion. Those who have already departed from this life do not know of our being frustrated or not. We seem to be only puppets made of straw.

Theme

The theme of the poem is that human beings have become soulless. They try to depend upon each other but they cannot make a society. All their efforts are like the running of rats or the rustling of grass. We do have shapes but inside there is nothing. We only seem to be walking souls but actually we are not.

Vocabulary

hollow	having a hole or empty space inside, not solid.
stuff	the material or substance out of which anything is or can be made; raw material.
head piece	a covering for the head
whisper	speak softly
cellar	underground room for storing things.

EXERCISES

1. Choose the correct answer from the options given below:

i. The poet calls men _____.

a) hungry b) thirsty

c) hollow d) cruel

ii. This poem has been written by _____.

a) Keats b) T. S. Eliot

c) W. B. Yeats d) Byron

iii. The title of the poem is _____.

a) The hollow men

b) The hollow man

c) The hollow woman

d) The hollow women

iv. We convey _____.

a) nothing b) something

c) anything d) a few words

2. Tick the statements True / False.

i. We are hollow men. T/F

ii. We do not whisper together. T/F

iii. Shape without form, shade with colour. T/F

iv. We do not lean together. T/F

3. Add two more rhyming words to each of the words given below:

i. Hollow ______ ______ ______

ii. Glass ______ ______ ______

iii. Colour ______ ______ ______

iv. Wind ______ ______ ______

4. **Write down the missing words in each verse. Options are given below:**

i. We are hollow _____.

a) men b) boys
c) women d) girls

ii. Or rats' feet over broken _____.

a) table b) chair
c) glass d) mirror

iii. Remember us, if at all, not as _____.

a) lost b) found
c) unwise d) hungry

iv. Violent souls, but _____.

a) only b) really
c) dead d) alive

5. **Write down a critical note on the poem.**

6. **Give a summary of the poem.**

7. **Why does the poet call modem men as hollow men?**

8. **What is the poet trying to say in the last stanza of the poem?**

Poem No. 11

LEISURE

What is this life if, full of care
We have no time to stand and stare?

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows:

No time to see, in broad day light,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile, her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare

(William Henry Davis)

Theme

The poet has based this poem on personal experience. He thinks that one is so busy in coping with daily routines of life that most of the time the beauty and the joys of life are ignored.

One has no time to enjoy and look at the wonders around us. He has mentioned the animals on the pastures, the stars in the sky, the music and smiles around him. According to poet's point of view, a poor man's life is so full of worries and cares that he cannot even stand and look up at things as they are around him.

EXERCISES

1. **Read the poem and complete the lines with the rhyming word.**
   i. What is the life if full of care
   We have no time to stand and _____.
   ii. No time to see in broad day _____
   Streams full of stars like skies at night.
   iii. A poor life this if,full or care
   We have no time and ______.
2. **Why do you think the poet has given this title to his poem when he is talking about life full of cares with no time to stand and stare. (100 to 150 words)**
3. **What is the poet trying to say in the last two lines of the poem?**
4. **Write down the pairs of all rhyming words in the poem.**

Poem No. 12

RUBA'IYAT

Faith is like Abraham at the stake: to be
Self-honoring and God-drunk, is faith. Hear me,
You whom this age's way so captivate!
To have no faith is worse than slavery.

Music of strange lands with Islam's fire blends,
On which the nation's harmony depends;
Empty of concord is the soul of Europe,
Whose civilization to no Makkah bends.

Love's madness has departed: in
The Muslim's veins the blood runs thin;
Ranks broken, hearts perplexed, prayers cold,
No feeling deeper than the skin.

(Allama Muhammad Iqbal)

Words Meaning

stake	strong
captivate	fascinate
concord	harmony, agreement

Theme

In this modern age of fascination, faith strong like that of Hazrat Abraham (A.S.) is required. Though he was thrown in fire by his opponents he was saved by his faith in God. Muslim harmony depends upon true faith in Islam. The Europeans are devoid of it and are suffering and fighting with one another. People have become materialistic and in pursuit of music and madness for modern civilization they have become slavish to the

Europeans who are devoid of spiritual faith. The Muslims have departed from the true spirit of Islam. The lack of love for humanity has made the efforts of the Muslims fruitless.

EXERCISES

1. **Who was Abraham (A.S.)?**
2. **What is worse than slavery?**
3. **Who cannot compete with the civilization of Makkah?**
4. **What has made the efforts of Muslims fruitless?**
5. **What is the moral lesson of the poem?**
6. **What is the present state of the Muslims as given in the last stanza of the poem?**
7. **Paraphrase in your own words the last two lines in the second stanza of the poem.**

Poem No. 13

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

In the storms of the shrills
Of arms, smoke and the drills
All were scarred, burnt and afraid
Powerless and helpless were they made'.

Woeful were all the hills
Wasteful were all the grills
None to share their moans
None to lessen their groans.

The flowers, flavours all smashed
Burnt, crushed and all dashed
And all passed through the grind
Leaving there nothing behind.

No eye could look
The explosion that took
The lives of two glories
In the moments of furies.

All was done by a nation
Who in her wild passion
Cared not for the human rights
Nor saved them from deadly fights.

But how much great were they
Who bore the pains of black day
"Ashes are not merely the waste
They can really create the great."

Words Meaning

woeful	grieved
smashed	destroyed

Theme

The people of the two cities of Japan passed through the most cruel period of their lives when the atomic bombs burst and destroyed the glory of their culture and civilization. They suffered all the pains and pangs patiently and boldly , and did not lose heart. They, with their great will and determination again rose to the heights of the universe as an economic power from the ashes.

EXERCISES

1. **Why do the people look powerless and helpless?**
2. **Under what circumstances the victims have to pass through?**
3. **Describe the scene of devastation?**
4. **What is the moral lesson of the poem?**
5. **Write down the rhyming words and use them in sentences of your own?**
6. **Write two more rhyming words:**
   i. afraid ______ ______
   ii. moans ______ ______
   iii. kites ______ ______

Poem No. 14

MY NEIGHBOUR FRIEND BREATHING HIS LAST!

My neighbour friend breathing his last!
What should I do, O god! Aghast!
He is to leave, now can't remain,
Companions ready catch the train.
  What should I do, O God! Aghast!

On every side decamping talk,
At every place are shrieks in stock
  What should I do, O God! Aghast!

Flare up flames in heart to height,
For, visible is not charming sight.
  What should I do, O God! Aghast!

Without His love, Bullah in loss,
Can hardly dwell here or across.
  What should I do, O God! Aghast!

(Bullah Shah)
Translated by A. R. Luther

Words Meaning

aghast	terrified
decamping	going away (secretly)
shrieks	cries
flare up	burst into bright flame

Theme

The death of a neighbour friend terrifies the poet and puts him in a state of shock. The dead leave this world and leave behind relatives to mourn for them.

Everything charming in the world becomes invisible. The only appreciable thing is the love of God without which everyone is at loss.

EXERCISES

1. **When does a person remember God?**
2. **What is the effect of the death scene?**
3. **Why does a person feel helpless on the death of a friend?**
4. **What does flare up flames in heart to height?**
5. **Without whose love is Bullah in loss?**
6. **Write down the rhyming words used in the poem.**
7. **What conclusion does the poet arrive at as expressed in the last three lines of the poem.**
8. **Write down the poem in your own words.**

Poem No. 15

HE CAME TO KNOW HIMSELF

He came to know Himself
Naught else had He in view
To be able to realize this
He got enmeshed in love
He alighted from high heaven
To pour a cascade of love
Became Mansur to mount the gallows
Just to have His head cut off.
He treaded the bazaars of Egypt
Just to be sold for a slave
Sachu speaks the bare Truth
To speak of His sojourn on earth

(Sachal Sarmast)

Words Meaning

naught	nothing
enmeshed	entangled
cascade	waterfall
Mansur	a saint who was so deeply involved in the love of God that he started saying 'I am God'
gallows	wooden frame work on which to put criminals to death by hanging
sold for a slave	reference to Hazrat Yousaf (A.S.) who was sold for a slave in the bazaar of Egypt
sojourn	stay at different places during a long journey

Theme

One who knows himself and knows also that he is a wonderful thing created by the Creator, God, cannot have a view of anything else except God Almighty. He starts loving Him, Who blesses him with great love. In such state of affairs every other thing becomes useless and like Mansur, he feels pleased and is willing to be hanged on the gallows to get his head cut off only for the Love of His beloved, God. The poet thinks that a person's stay on earth is temporary. It is better for a man to have been loved. The union of soul with another soul through the chemistry of love is the highest mystic truth.

EXERCISES

1. **Why does the poet put emphasis on how to know himself?**
2. **What makes one entangled in love?**
3. **Why did Mansur mount the gallows?**
4. **What is the bare Truth?**
5. **Explain these lines:**

   He alighted from high heaven

   To pour a cascade of love
6. **What is the poet saying about his sojourn on earth in the last line.**

Poem No. 16

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

God calls Himself 'Seeing' to the end that
His eye may scare you from sinning.
God calls Himself 'Hearing' to the end that
You may close your lips against foul discourse.
God calls Himself 'Knowing' to the end that
You may be afraid of Him to plot an evil.
These are not mere accidental names of God
As a negro may be called camphor;
So are these names derived from God's attributes,
And not mere vain titles of the First Cause.

(Jalaluddin Rumi)
Translated by Dr. Nichalson

Words Meaning

scare	terrify
discourse	talk
camphor	strong smelling substance

Theme

The attributes of God are not mere vain titles but are meaningful and effective for character building. For example, when God calls Himself All Seeing, it restrains a person from doing wrong and when God calls Himself All Hearing, it checks a person from using a foul language; Knowing God's attributes makes one afraid of plotting an evil against others.

EXERCISES

1. **How many attributes are mentioned in the poem?**
2. **What makes one scare of sinning?**
3. **What are the effects of the attributes of God?**
4. **Mention three more attributes of God.**
5. **How do these attributes help in refining the character of a person?**
6. **God calls Himself "Hearing". How does this attribute of God help one in daily speech?**
7. **Do you think these attributes of God are remembered and kept in mind by us in our daily routine work?**
8. **Write down a few sentences for each of the attributes of God given below with reference to the present life style.**
   i. **"Seeing to the end"**
   ii. **"Hearing to the end"**
   iii. **"Knowing to the end"**
9. **Make pair of words similar in sound e.g. wait - weight**
   end, scare, may, vain, lips, day, mere, talk, that, dare, bat, sheer, walk, crane, sips, bend

Poem No. 17

THE DELIGHT SONG

I am a feather on the bright sky
I am the blue horse that runs in the plain
I am the fish that rolls, shining, in the water
I am the shadow that follows a child
I am the evening light, the luster of meadows
I am the eagle playing with the wind
I am a cluster of bright beads
I am the farthest star
I am the cold of the dawn
I am the roaring of the rain
I am the glitter on the crust of the snow
I am the long track of the moon in a lake
I am the flame of four colors
I am the whole dream of these things

You see, I am alive, I am alive
I stand in good relation to the earth
I stand in good relation to the lords
I stand in good relation to all that is beautiful
I stand in good relation to all that is fruitful
You see, I am alive, I am alive.

(N. Scott Momaday)

Theme

It is a delightful song in which the poet feels light as a feather in the bright sky. Every thing seems to be in harmony with the poet who finds no hurdles or difficulties anywhere in this universe. He has good relations with beauty, living things, nature, the atmosphere and the natural phenomena of stars, wind, dawn, rain, moon, snow.

He is happy and contented with the dream of all things bright and beautiful, all colours that glitter the rain. He is in complete harmony and has good relation even with the shadow of a child, the cold of dawn, the glitter of snow and the flame of fire.

He is so vivacious and full of life. The good relation of man with the earth and the atmosphere keeps him alive and active.

Words Meaning

luster	soft reflected light
cluster	closely together
glitter	light, shine

EXERCISES

1. **What do you understand when the poet says, "I am the shadow that follows a child"?**
2. **How can the crust of the snow glitter?**
3. **What is the dream of the poet?**
4. **What is the effect of man's good relation with the earth and the lords?**
5. **What are the things that keep a person alive?**
6. **Pessimist and optimist are two words which describe the state of mind of a person who is hopeful and another who is in despair.**
   Can you tell which of the two states of the mind go well with this poem?
7. **Write down your opinion in a few sentences basing it on the theme of the poem.**

Poem No. 18

LOVE – AN ESSENCE OF ALL RELIGIONS

Through love thorns become roses, and
Through love vinegar becomes sweet wine,
Through love the stake becomes a throne,
Through love misfortune becomes good fortune,
Through love burning fire becomes pleasing light,
Through love stone becomes soft as butter,
Through love grief becomes a joy,
Through love lions become harmless
Through love sickness becomes health,
Through love wrath seems to be a mercy,
Through love the dead rise to life,
Through love the king becomes a slave.

(Jalaluddin Rumi)
Translated by Dr. Nicholson

Words Meaning

vinegar	acid liquor used in flavouring food and for pickling
stake	post (to which a person was tied)
wrath	great anger

Theme

Love is an essence of all religions. It is love that changes the adversities into pleasures such as thorns become roses, vinegar becomes sweet wine, burning fire a pleasing light, sickness becomes health and the king a slave. Life becomes a success by love otherwise life without love is not worth living.

EXERCISES

1. **Why does the poet put emphasis on love?**
2. **What is the effect of love?**
3. **Is life worth living without love?**
4. **There are a number of opposites in this poem. Given below are words taken from the poem. Write down the opposites as given in the poem.**

   Example:

thorns	**roses**
misfortune	
stone	
grief	
sickness	
wrath	
dead	
king	

5. **Roses, gone, health, fight, throne, poses, joy, wealth, light, toy, thorn, love, horn, dove.**

   Make pairs of rhyming words from the list of words above.

Poem No. 19

A MAN OF WORDS AND NOT OF DEEDS

A man of words and not of deeds,
Is like a garden full of weeds.
And when the weeds begin to grow,
It's like a garden full of snow.
And when the snow begins to fall,
It's like a bird upon the wall.
And when the bird away does fly,
It's like an eagle in the sky.
And when the sky begins to roar,
It's like a lion at the door.
And when the door begins to crack,
It's like a stick across your back.
And when your back begins to smart,
It's like a penknife in your heart.
And when your heart begins to bleed,
You're dead and dead and dead indeed.

(Charles Perrault 1628-1703)
Translated by Robert Samber

Words Meaning

weeds	wild plants growing where it is not wanted
roar	loud, deep sound as of a lion
smart	feel or cause a sharp pain

Theme

A man who always talks and boasts, and is not involved in any practical work is like a wild plant that grows in a garden instead of a flower. And when it is once grown it further aggravates the situation like a snow in winter. Life passes through different phases and ultimately comes to an end with the death of a person. It is, therefore, necessary that a man must always engage himself in some fruitful activity to make life pleasant and useful for humanity.

EXERCISES

1. **Paraphrase the poem.**
2. **How does the life of man pass through different phases of it?**
3. **What happens when the life is not of deeds but is full of words?**
4. **What is the condition of the garden when the weeds start growing?**
5. **Write down the rhyming words and use them in sentences of your own.**
6. **What is the moral of the poem?**

Poem No. 20

IN BROKEN IMAGES

He is quick, thinking in clear images;
I am slow, thinking in broken images.

He becomes dull, trusting to his clear images;
I become sharp, mistrusting my broken images.

Trusting his images, he assumes their relevance;
Mistrusting my images, I question their relevance.

Assuming their relevance, he assumes the fact;
Questioning their relevance, I question the fact.

When the fact fails him, he questions his senses;
When the fact fails me, I approve my senses.

He continues quick and dull in his clear images;
I continue slow and sharp in my broken images.

He in a new confusion of his understanding;
I in a new understanding of my confusion.

(Robert Graves)

Words Meaning

assumes	undertakes
relevance	connection with what is discussed

Theme

A person should remain inquisitive about the images of life whether they are broken or clear. One, who trusts one's clear images without proof, becomes dull in one's life whereas the other who mistrusts his broken images becomes sharp and intelligent. Nothing should be taken for granted and one should remain thoughtful and considerate about the facts of life. Inquiry into the nature of things leads one to understand and accept the ground realities of life.

EXERCISES

1. **What is the state of condition of two persons, one who trusts clear images and the other who mistrusts the broken images?**
2. **Why does a person question his senses when the facts fail him?**
3. **Who is in a new confusion of his understanding?**
4. **What is the moral lesson of the poem?**
5. **Rewrite the poem in past tense.**
6. **Paraphrase the first two lines of the poem in your own words.**
7. **What conclusion does the poet draw in the last two lines of the poem? Write in detail.**

APPEAL

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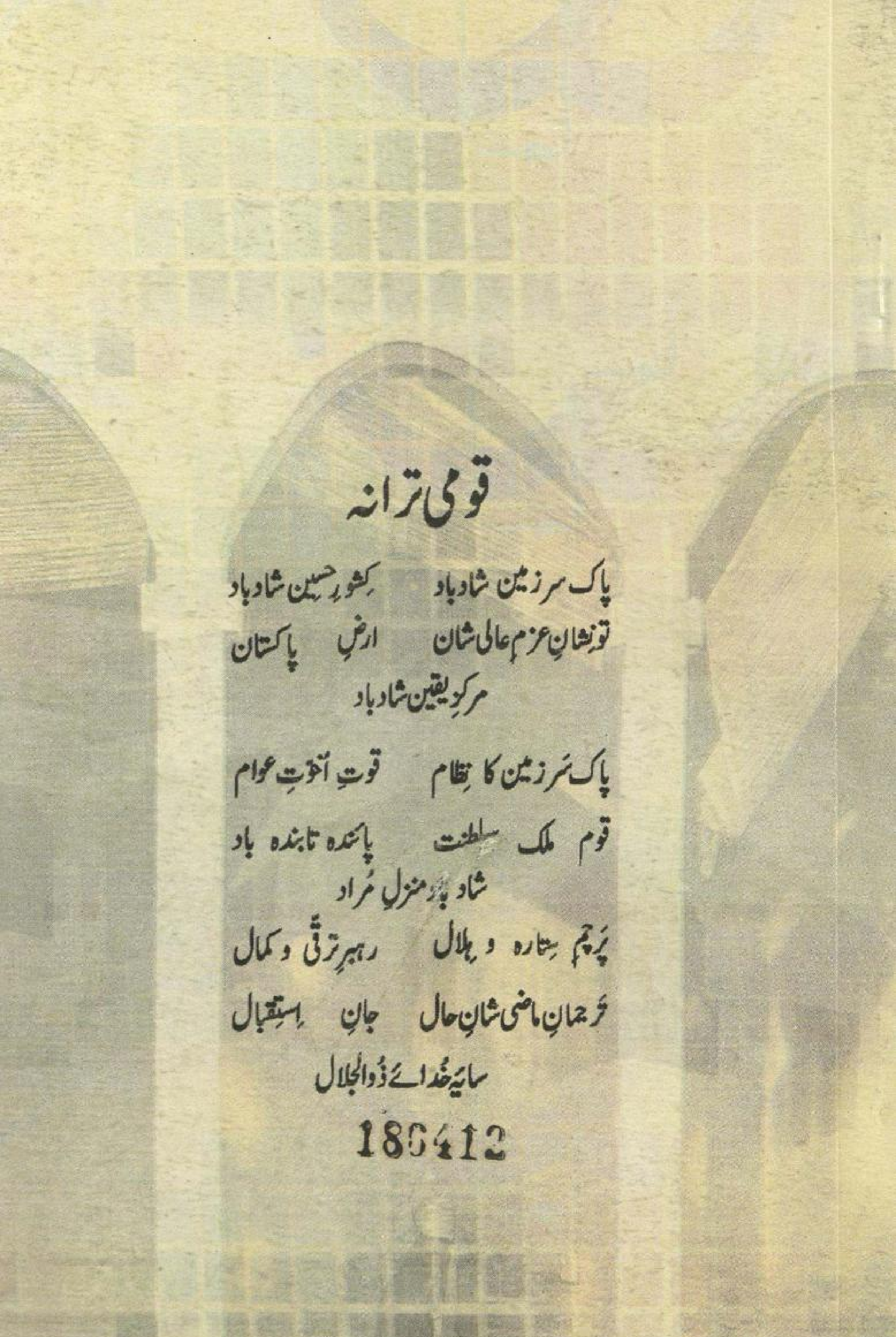

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